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Strategy and Vision in Politics.

Jawaharlal Nehru's policy choices and the designing of political institutions.

Inauguraldissertation

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades Dr. rer. pol.

im Fach Politikwissenschaft

vorgelegt von:

JIVANTA SCHÖTTLI, M.Sc.

Eingereicht an der

Fakultät für Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften

der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

im Sommer Semester 2009

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DOCTORVATER:

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Contents

List of Figures & Tables vi.

Chapter One: The art and craft of policy-making.

1.1. The Problem Stated 1 - 4

1.2. Research Design 5 - 10

1.3. Modernisation, political development and political disorder in political science 10 - 29

1.4. *Nehruana* literature 30 - 43

1.5. Conclusion 44 – 47

Chapter Two: Epistemology, Theory and Methodology.

2.1. Introduction 48 - 49

2.2. Rationality, methodological individualism and the 'Cunning of Reason' 49 - 54

2.3. New Institutionalism & Path Dependence: explaining inefficiencies in history 54 - 60

2.4. The Analytic Narrative and Historical Institutionalism 60 - 68

2.5. Path Dependency and Policy Studies 68 - 70

2.6. Designing a model: vision and strategy in policy-making 70 - 71

2.6.1. The Puzzle: designing stable institutions in times of change 72 - 74

2.6.2. The Hypothesis: vision and strategy as inputs 75 - 81

2.6.3. The Explanandum: policy outcomes and institutional resilience 82 - 87

2.6.4. The Unit of Analysis: three cases of policy-making 87 - 88

2.6.5. The Sources for data collection 88 - 89

2.7. Conclusion: the methodological challenges of working on a historical figure 89 – 92

www.historymarg.com

Chapter Three: Nehru, his world view.

3.1.	Introduction	93 - 96
3.2.	Nehru's Formative Phase	96 - 113
3.3.	Nehru's Intellectual Context	113 - 117
3.4.	The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites	117 - 121
	3.4.1. Nehru on Religion and Secularism	121 - 133
	3.4.2. Nehru on Economic Development and Socialism	133 - 140
	3.4.3. Nehru on Foreign policy and Internationalism	140 - 148
3.4.	Conclusion: operationalising a cognitive map	148 - 150

Chapter Four: Contextualising Nehru:
his contemporaries and 'the structure of opportunities'.

4.1.	Introduction	151 - 153
4.2.	Organisation of the Indian National Congress	153 - 158
4.3.	Nehru as Congress President:	
	a content analysis of his presidential addresses.	158 - 171
4.4.	Nehru's Contemporaries	171 - 175
	4.4.1. Rajendra Prasad	175 - 180
	4.4.2. Subhas Chandra Bose	180 – 188
	4.4.3. Vallabhbhai Patel	188 - 192
4.5.	Consolidating Power: the struggle for dominance	192
	4.5.1. Nehru's position within the INC: 1947 – 1955	192 - 196
	4.5.2. Nehru as political entrepreneur: transforming the Congress-led movement into a political party**.**	196 - 204
4.6.	Conclusion	205 – 206

www.historymarg.com

Chapter Five: The Planning Commission

5.1. Introduction: the Puzzle 207 - 212

5.2. Pre-history: the Origins of Planning in India 212 - 222

5.3. The Structure of Opportunities at the time of the Constituent Assembly Debates 223 - 227

5.4. The Planning Commission: an analytic narrative of original intentions, functions and the constraints on institution building 227 - 242

5.5. Vision and Strategy in the framing of the First and Second Five Year Plans 242

5.5.1. The First Five Year Plan: negotiated consensus 242 - 245

5.5.2. The Second Five Year Plan: "the adoption of the socialist pattern of society as the national objective" 245 - 254

5.6. Analyzing the *political* origins of planning in India 254 - 262

5.7. Conclusion: the Planning Commission as a repository of values 262 - 265

Chapter Six: The Panchasheela Agreement.

6.1. Introduction: the Puzzle 266 - 271

6.2. Pre-history: British India's foreign policy 272 - 274

6.3. Nehru on foreign affairs: the Constituent Assembly Debates 275 - 276

6.4. The discourse on foreign policy: alternatives to and critics of Nehru 276 - 285

6.5. The Panchasheela Agreement: an analytic narrative of institutions, functions and constraints. 285 - 292

6.6. The Implications of Panchasheela 293 – 295

www.historymarg.com

6.7. Analysing the Origins of the Panchasheela Agreement 296

6.7.1. K.M.Panikkar 296 - 299

6.7.2. T.N.Kaul 299 -301

6.7.3. Krishna Menon 302 - 306

6.8. Conclusion: Vision and Strategy in the Panchaseela Agreement 306 – 310

Chapter Seven: the Hindu Code Bills.

7.1. Introduction: the Puzzle 311 – 315

7.2. Pre-history: Personal Law and Codification under the British 315 – 318

7.3. Secularism and Social Reform in Nehru's Vision of modern India 318 – 322

7.4. The Discourse on Codification 322

7.4.1 The Constituent Assembly Debates 322 – 330

7.4.2 The Interim Legislative Assembly 330 – 332

7.5. The Structure of Opportunities surrounding the Hindu Code 332

7.5.1 The First Lok Sabha (17 April 1952 – 4 April 1957) 332 – 341

7.5.2. Nehru's Changing Position 341 – 349

7.6. The Substance and Implications of the Hindu Code 349 – 354

7.8. Conclusion. The Hindu Code legacy: a triumph of strategy over vision? 354 – 358

Chapter 8: Conclusion.

8.1. The shelf life of Nehru's Institutions:

a comparative study of the three policies. 359 - 369

8.2. Methodological individualism and rationality as heuristic devices:

Nehru as political actor. 370 – 372

8.3. An analytic narrative of institution formation: vision and strategy

in the making of Nehru's policies. 373 – 376

www.historymarg.com

8.4. Key Findings of the thesis. 377

8.4.1. Path dependence and the origins of institutions 377

8.4.2. Institutional change and development 377 – 380

8.5. Nehru as a case study: leadership, policy-making and the analysis of politics. 380 – 383

Methodoligical Note on Sources 385

Bibliography 385 – 400

Appendix: list of documents 401 – 402

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List of Figures & Tables

Figure 1: Model of policy-making

Figure 2: Path dependency of policy choices.

Figure 3: Organigram of Congress Organisational Structure

Figure 4: Organigram of Congress Organisation (based on 1951 Congress Party Constitution)

Table 1: Context and Chronology

Table 2: Nehru's Presidential Addresses

Table 3: Key Congress Party Resolutions

Table 4: Nehru and his contemporaries

Table 5: Phases in the process towards planning

Table 6: The Changing Structure of Opportunities and Nehru's Strategy in Foreign Policy.

Table 7: The Hindu Code and existing legislation

Table 8: The Changing Structure of Opportunities and the Hindu Code Bills.

Table 9: The shelf life of Nehru's Institutions: the Planning Commission, Panchasheela and the Hindu Code Bills.

Table 10: The Process behind Nehru's Policies

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Chapter One

The art and craft of policy-making.

1.1. The Problem Stated.

1.2. Research Design.

1.3. Modernisation, political development and political disorder in political science.

1.4. *Nehruana* literature.

1.5. Conclusion.

1.1. The Problem Stated.

This thesis seeks to analyse the art and craft of policy-making. By focusing on Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, the aim is to take both actor and context seriously. Nehru, who led the country for seventeen years, initially as head of the interim legislature (1947 – 1952) and then winning general elections three times (1952, 1957, 1961), was also leader of the Indian National Congress party in addition to holding other ministerial posts during his prime ministership. Having spent altogether more than nine years imprisoned during the independence struggle[1] and anointed as successor to Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru attained a larger than life stature in Indian politics. The impact he had, has been long-lasting and far-reaching. His admirers and critics alike, attribute the resilience of India's democracy to his

[1] On December 6, 1921, Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested for the first time, along with his father, Motilal Nehru. Jawaharlal was briefly released and then re-arrested. Motilal was released in 1922 while Jawaharlal was released on January 31, 1923. Other periods of jail sentence followed: October 19, 1930 – January 1931; December 26, 1931 to August 30, 1933; February 12, 1934 – September 1935; November 1940 – December 1941; August 1942 – June 1945.

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stewardship during the crucial decades after independence, from the years 1947 to 1964. However, as will be demonstrated the existing literature on Nehru tends to be narrative at best and sycophantic at worst. Furthermore, there is surprisingly little that deals with the 1950s in an analytic and systematic way, a period which would seem to be a crucial phase in the transition from colony to post-colonial state with important implications for the long-run consolidation of India's modern, democratic institutions. Addressing this gap, the thesis proposes an interpretation based upon a theoretical framework where the individual actor's choices are set within a specific institutional context. Nehru is the 'pivotal actor' given the power he gradually accumulated[2] and thus his preferences, world view and 'vision' need to be explored in depth and detail. He cannot however, be seen in isolation for both during the formative phase prior to independence and as prime minister, contextual constraints need to be taken into account. This is where the existing literature is again disappointing for there are only scattered examinations of the power politics at the time of independence.[3] Nehru's position of power was by no means guaranteed and translating his preferences into policy required both tactical manoeuvring and bargaining. The goal of the thesis therefore is to turn attention towards Nehru, the political actor, to identify the challenges that he faced, the strategies that were devised to maintain, enhance and project power, and in the process, the impact this had on the policies that were formulated and implemented under his leadership.

The thesis selects three policy choices for which Jawaharlal Nehru can be personally associated with and which also represent the three core pillars of Nehru's overall modernization project: the secular state, a non-aligned foreign policy, and a self-sufficient

[2] Jawaharlal Nehru was the prime minister of India from August 15, 1947 till his death in May 1964. During this time he also held the positions of Minister for External Affairs of India (for the entire period) and Finance Minister of India for one year (1958 – 1959), in addition to acting as chairperson on numerous committees and organisations and most importantly, serving as president of the Indian National Congress party on three occasions after independence (1951, 53 and 54).

[3] See section 1.4. for a literature review of the publications on Jawaharlal Nehru.

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economy. The Hindu Code Bills of the 1950s was legislation that aimed at reforming Hindu law and produced extensive parliamentary debates on the treatment of majority and minority communities and the dual, sometimes conflicting, duty of the state to act as reformer and modernizing agent as well as guarantor of equality and security. The Panchasheela Agreement signed by India and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1954 was showcased at the time as a success story for non-alignment and the founding of the Planning Commission in 1950 established the leading authority on industrial policy for the planned economy. In all three cases extensive public debates were generated, first in the form of the Constituent Assembly Debates[4] and later the *Lok Sabha* Debates.[5] These three are selected because Nehru promoted them as key policies and each was given prominence during the general elections when they were advocated as central goals of the Congress party manifesto as defining issues that set the Congress apart from other political parties. Furthermore it is argued that the early 1950s were a period of intense power mongering as Nehru faced the challenge of consolidating his power. Each of these policies therefore became both a test as well as demonstration of power. The criteria of success are proposed as (1) Nehru's preferences being articulated within the Congress party resolutions, (2) Nehru's preference becoming the dominant position within the party and parliamentary terms of debate and, (3) Nehru's preference taking shape in the form of policy.

Furthermore, it is posited that the decade of the 1950s was a crucial one that profoundly shaped India's subsequent political development. To qualify such a proposition the thesis draws upon the insights of *path dependency* which claims that choices made in the past can set into motion a self-reproducing dynamic through which a set of preferences

[4] Formed in 1946 the Constituent Assembly was elected to write the Constitution of India and served as the country's first parliament after independence.
[5] Parliamentary debates.

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remain predominant.[6] As a result, the ability to change or deviate from a particular course becomes more and more difficult as time goes by. The heuristic value of this concept and the problems associated with it are examined further on in the chapter.

The three cases are particularly interesting if one raises the question of how successful was Nehru in terms of fulfilling and implementing his own ideals? An argument can be made that, both Panchasheela and the Hindu Code Bills were failures leading neither to peaceful friendly brotherhood with China nor paving the way towards a uniform civil code applicable to all citizens regardless of religion or community as the basis for a secular state. The Planning Commission on the other hand is an example of a successful institutional arrangement that facilitated and coordinated the goals of a planned economy. If, in addition one examines the long-run implications of these three policy choices the contrast is brought out even more strongly. While the Planning Commission was to become unassailable it also proved itself to be highly adaptable, transforming itself from being the central component in a planned economy, to a mechanism and facilitator of marketisation, privatization and capitalization during the period of economic liberalisation. In contrast, the Panchasheela agreement bequeathed a legacy of ambiguity[7] and contradictions in India's foreign policy in general and towards China in particular whilst the Hindu Code Bills left in its wake a highly polarised political arena and an incomplete agenda of establishing a secular legal system for all.

[6] A discussion of this concept will follow.

[7] I have applied this concept previously in an article co-authored with Mitra, S.K. 'The new Dynamics of Indian Foreign Policy and its Ambiguities', *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol. 18 (2007), pp. 19 – 34 where I used it to refer to contradictions such as the possession of nuclear weapons but the lack of a nuclear doctrine and the swings from appeasement, assertion to aggression that seem to characterise much of India's foreign policy record.

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1.2. Research Design.

The thesis aims at a theory-driven case study where Jawaharlal Nehru is examined as a case of leadership. Individual policies are taken as the unit of analysis since this allows one to explore (a) the ideas that he represented, (b) the institutional and political constraints of his context (c) the range of alternatives available at the time (d) the decision-making process and, (e) the longer-run implications for policy implementation. By focusing on policy as the unit of analysis one gains an insight into both the internal (cognitive) and external (contextual) factors that go into decision-making, which provides a better understanding of why an actor made a particular choice. Whilst the thesis aims at implementing a general model for studying leaders, Nehru's context plays an important role given the historical background of the transfer of power from the British to independent India. It is argued that at times like these, known as 'critical junctures' in the literature on path dependency and historical institutionalism (terms that will be explained in the following chapter), the policy-making process is an additionally important instrument and mechanism of leadership given that the leader faces unusually high expectations and a stronger than normal level of legitimacy. It is posited, further on in this chapter, that this is an unusual approach to studying Nehru as a political actor and the implications that his preferences had for India's subsequent political development. In the final, concluding chapter of the thesis a case will be made to demonstrate the usefulness of such an approach in understanding leadership in general.

Two questions initiated the research behind the thesis: (1) what were the factors that determined Nehru's decisions and, (2) can one evaluate the consequences of the choices made? These emerged out of a curiosity about how to study the legacies of key political

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actors. The narrative biography whilst useful for details and insights more often than not fails to provide the basis for a comparison across time and space. Nor does the format of a biography usually allow for a systematic analysis of intentions of the actor(s) on the one hand and eventual outcome(s), on the other. Hence the thesis begins with a theory of agency which takes both the actor's preferences into account as well as the strategic context. For this, the analysis borrows from new institutionalism in particular, the insight that sequence and timing in the decision-making process matters and that rationality is context-dependent.

Going beyond the causes of action, to explore the consequences, the argument is made that, at 'critical junctures', key policy decisions can alter a country's path of institutional development. Identified by a prominent historical institutionalist as an instrument of analysis "that traces divergent trajectories back to systematic differences either in antecedent conditions or in the timing, sequencing, and interaction of specific political-economic processes, suggesting that not all options are equally viable at any given point in time"[8] it is posited in the thesis that the early 1950s represented such a 'critical juncture'. While there was continuity with the colonial period, the transfer of power, as the process of handing over power to Indians came to be known, and the subsequent shape of India's political institutions were far from inevitable. Most early India observers expected Indian democracy and territorial unity to be short lived. Instead, the period and its leaders generated a set of political institutions that represented a unique blend of continuity and disjuncture with the colonial past. Jawaharlal Nehru, as a political figure, was at the centre of this transition to and consolidation of power.

[8] Thelen, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1999, p. 385.

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In the case of India, the phase leading up to independence and its immediate aftermath was a period of intense negotiation and bargaining during which the premises for institutional design were laid out. While Nehru is certainly to be credited with having sustained India's fledgling democracy and providing the country with a period of stability, the policies directly associated with him have not been subjected to a rigorous analysis. This, it is argued is a major lapse, for the existing Nehru literature tends towards biography and hagiography. By focusing on the micro-level of decision making and policy implementation it is proposed that a more finely grained appraisal of the 'Nehru era' will be possible.

To do this, the thesis applies a 'structured, focused comparison' to three examples of policy choices. As Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett explain in their book, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences, the method is 'structured' because general questions are being asked that reflect the research objective and these questions are asked of each thus making systematic comparison possible. The method is 'focused' because it deals with certain, specified aspects of the historical cases being examined.

The thesis concerns itself with four central variables:

(1) The structure of opportunities which is observed in terms of the power structure at the time, identified in terms of the organisational set-up, the various contenders for power and the range of issue positions.

(2) Vision which is defined in terms of the meaning that particular issues have for the actor both in terms of their inherent value, as ends in themselves and, as instruments for attaining something else. This draws upon the distinction that has been drawn by Max Weber in terms of *wertrationalität* and *zweckrationalität* and will be discussed in the following chapter.

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(3) Strategy which is examined in terms of tactics such as the timing of decisions, the framing of policy debates and the justifications used to promote a particular policy.

(4) The policy outcome which is compared across the three examples in terms of the institutional provisions that arise as a result of a particular policy choice.

The first three are explanatory variables that are proposed as having an important effect on the policy outcome.

In chapter two an underlying model is presented using the above variables and based upon assumptions and insights drawn from the theories of rational choice, new institutionalism and historical institutionalism. Chapter two also contains a section on the methodology applied and addresses the challenge of remaining within the remit of political science whilst studying a historical figure. The choice of case studies is discussed as well as the sources of data. A model of the policy-making process is constructed through which each of the three policy examples is examined. To operationalise 'Vision', chapter three examines Nehru's preferences and worldview as articulated in his early writings. Chapter four goes on to examine the structure of opportunities in terms of his political rivals and the situational considerations of power politics with which he was confronted. A study is also made of the consistency of his preferences comparing his Congress party presidential speeches with his private writings. The subsequent three chapters take up each of the case studies individually and present an investigation into the strategies employed by Nehru in pushing through policies in the three fields of social reform, economic development and foreign policy. A final chapter summarises the findings generated through a comparison across the three cases and explores the implications that initial policy choices have for policy implementation in the longer-run.

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The remainder of this chapter serves as an introduction to the subject of analysis: Jawaharlal Nehru, his vision and strategy. To place the study of Nehru within a wider context, the following section examines the various arguments that characterized political science studies of the non-western world during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. This is important because the study of Indian politics has been and continues to be dominated by concepts, ideas and discussions emanating from the discourse on modernization, political development and the role of the 'post-colonial state'[9]. An analysis of a particular leader and his polices, it is proposed, provides a different entry-point into the broad phenomena of 'old societies and new states' since it does not begin with assumptions about the 'appropriate objectives' for 'changing societies' as Huntington did in his 1968 book, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, or the presumption of an ideal-type universal, modern state. Instead the thesis takes leadership as an indigenous, home-grown category that is comparable across time and space in terms of the resources available to the actor and the constraints under which he/she operates. All leaders it is posited seek to capture, increase or retain power. The nature of power and the methods needed to attain or maintain it, vary according to the historical and socio-cultural context. Hence the post-colonial state, as Mitra argues, "is a member of a species in the sense that it shares these objectives and attributes with other modern states. However, it diverges....in the importance accorded to 'pre-modern' political forms.....and....because they express different cultural values and traditions that form part of their cultural heritage."[10]

Having identified some of the key authors and texts within the older school of writing on modernisation, the chapter presents a historiography of the existing literature on Nehru (known in India as Nehruana). A selection of seven biographies is portrayed, dating from

[9] See Mitra, S.K. (ed.) *The Post-Colonial State in Asia* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hertfordshire, 1990).
[10] Ibid., p. 6.

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different periods in time, and an analysis made of how little has changed in terms of the interpretation and material used to depict and understand Nehru.

1.3. Modernisation, political development and political disorder in political science.

To analyse the existing literature on Nehru and, to a large extent, the writing on India's political development, it is useful to delve into the perspectives that dominated the field of political science in the 1950s and 60s. As will be demonstrated, following the survey below, the assumptions of that time have strongly influenced the scholarship on India.

Three general positions are identified in the social sciences literature that addresses the phenomena of modernization and political development in the non-western, post-colonial world. The first, dating from the late 1950s, was predominantly conducted by sociologists and economic historians who applied Western modernization as a model of global applicability, the 1960s witnessed a turn towards a more context-specific understanding of modernity and its interaction with tradition, and thirdly, the late 1960s generated model-driven approaches that sought to explain political order and disorder rather than political development. This section examines the epistemological assumptions of each of the above, demonstrating by reference to the studies on India, the weaknesses of these approaches. The chapter ends with the 1970s and the emergence of 'new institutionalism' and the school of rational choice in political science for these provide the thesis' theoretical framework and are closely examined in chapter two.

Characteristic of the late 1950s is the evolutionary point of view as represented by the writings of Rustow and Gerschenkron, both economic historians who proposed a stage-by-

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stage prognosis of economic development.[11] Such an approach implied that it was possible to categorise a country's 'level' of economic and even political development according to a set of attributes.[12] Unlike the pre-war view of industrialisation as degenerative and dangerous, the outlook of the 1950s highlighted the success of Western society, economy and politics. Modernisation, following the western path, was guaranteed to produce a 'modernity' comprising a political system that was more participatory and representative, an economy that was more efficient and a society that was more just, tolerant and rational.

Similarly, the sociologist, Daniel Lerner, in his 1958 book, *The Passing of Traditional Society* identified four sectors or dimensions that in the process of modernization, are systematically related to one another, these being: urbanization, literacy, media participation, and political participation.[13] By examining the relation between these four, Lerner believed it to be possible to rank societies in accordance with their degree of tradition, transition or modernity. This highly behavioural perspective produced studies that compiled attribute-checklists according to which the countries of the world could be ranked by the degree to which they approximated the characteristics of Western industrial societies.

Apter, in his *Politics of Modernisation* similarly employed a dichotomous view: the world of tradition on the one hand, where life revolves around the community, is ascription-oriented, particularistic and functionally diffuse and a modern world on the other, that is functionally specific, universalist and achievement-oriented.[14] The developmental paradigm

[11] Rustow, W.W. *The Stages of Economic Growth* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1960); Gerschenkron, A. *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*. (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

[12] Applied later by political scientists such as Almond, G. & Coleman, J. *The Politics of Developing Areas* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1960); Organski, A.F.K. *The Stages of Political Development* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1965)

[13] Lerner, D. *The Passing Of Traditional Society*, (New York, The Free Press, 1964), p.46.

[14] Apter, D.E. *The Politics of Modernisation*. (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1965).

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to emerge out of this world-view and epistemology of history and reality, proclaimed the inevitable need for traditional societies to change psychological attitudes, structure of social organisation as well as political change and economic growth.

The difficulties with such an approach are manifold. Among others, Richard Bendix identifies various methodological problems for example with the use of ideal types which creates a 'disjunctive characterisation of "tradition" and "modernity"'[15] where abstraction can result in the exaggeration or simplification of evidence. Referring to Max Weber, Bendix repeats the warning that "*Developmental* sequences too can be constructed into ideal types and these constructs can have quite considerable heuristic value. But this quite particularly gives rise to the danger that the ideal type and reality will be confused with one another".[16] The notion of 'prerequisites' is another term which Bendix sees as misleading. With its implication that countries need to replicate the conditions characteristic of modernity before they can ever hope to be successful in their drive for modernisation, the analyst ignores the possibility that some of the listed attributes may develop in the course of industrial development as a *consequence* rather than *cause* of modernisation.[17] Proposing a reorientation, Bendix suggested that "the industrialisation and democratisation of Western Europe was a singular historic breakthrough, culminating in a century-long and specifically European development. But modernisation brings about specific discontinuities by virtue of its expansive tendencies so that the relation between the intrinsic structure and external setting of societies assumes special significance. Thus, the internal, historically developed structure of a country and the emulation induced by economic and political developments

[15] Bendix, R. "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.9 (3), April 1967, p. 314.
[16] Weber, M. *The Methodology of Social Sciences*, (Glencoe, The Free Press, 1949), p.101
[17] Bendix, R. "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.9 (3), April 1967, p. 316.

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abroad affect each country's process of modernisation."[18] This can be formulated in terms of a 'non-linear modernity' which offers an alternative to the view of development and politics as linear, circular or punctuated, the important point being that even a non-linear trajectory has its own path dependent logic[19].

Applied to the case of India the above approach was countered by the observation that the country seemed to be experiencing processes of modernization that differed both in terms of sequence and timing as compared to the Western model, which according to Bendix referred to the social change induced by the industrial revolution of England, 1760-1830 and the political revolution in France, 1789-1794.[20] For instance in many European countries the franchise was extended rather slowly, while in many newly independent countries universal suffrage had been adopted all at once. A further methodological problem encountered by the early modernisation scholars was the question whether methods and concepts drawn from the Western experience of history were really applicable to non-Western contexts.[21] The need to account for, and recognize differences in the routes, the variation in the outcomes of modernization, prompted academics to reconsider the relationship between modernity and tradition.

The Rudolphs for example, examined the transformation of caste into 'bearer of both India's ancient regime and its democratic political revolution'.[22] The process of transformation was described by them as caste having 'reconstituted itself into the *sabha* with

[18] Ibid. p. 329.
[19] See Mitra, S.K. (ed.) *Politics of Modern South Asia. Critical Issues in Modern Politics* (Routledge, London, 2008) , pp. 2 – 5.
[20] Ibid. p. 329.
[21] See Sathyamurthy, T.V. *Terms of Political Discourse in India.* (University of York, York, 1989), p.5
[22] Rudolph, L. & Rudolph, S. "The Political Role of India's Caste Association", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 33/1, March, 1960, p.22.

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characteristics of both the natural and the voluntary association,… defined in terms of both *dharma* and democracy'.[23] Their book in 1967, *The Modernity of Tradition* delved more deeply into the structure and function of caste, analysing the relationship of caste and politics in terms of three types of political mobilisation: vertical[24], horizontal[25] and differential.[26] Modern politics, they posited, paradoxically appears to be an instrument for both the revival and, the suppression of traditional society. Their idea of something being both traditional and modern at the same time was a critical contribution to the literature on modernization and political development and further research continued in a similar vein, such as Gusfield[27], Morris-Jones[28] and Bendix.[29] Gusfield, writing in 1967 posited that the concept of political development is far more difficult and culture bound than is that of economic development, pointing out that 'what is seen today and labelled as the "traditional society" is often itself a product of change'.[30]

[23] Ibid., p.22.

[24] 'Vertical Mobilisation' is defined as "the marshalling of political support by traditional notables in local societies that are organised and integrated by rank, mutual dependence, and the legitimacy of traditional authority. Notables reach vertically into such social systems by attaching dependents and socially inferior groups to themselves through their interests and deference." Rudolph, L. and Rudolph, S. *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India*, (University of Chicago Press, London, 1967), p. 24.

[25] "Horizontal mobilisation involves the marshalling of popular political support by class or community leaders and their specialised organisations. Ignoring the leaders.....they make direct ideological appeals to classes or communities." Ibid, p. 25.

[26] "Differential mobilisation involves the marshalling of direct and indirect political support by political parties (and other integrative structures) from viable, but internally differentiated, communities through parallel appeals to ideology, sentiment and interest. The agent of mobilisation in this case is the political party rather than the local notable or community association". Ibid, p. 26.

[27] Gusfield, J.R. "Political Community and Group Interests in Modern India", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 36/ Summer 1965, pp.123-41; Gusfield, J.R. "Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change", *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.72/4 (Jan, 1967), pp351-362.

[28] Morris-Jones (*The Government and Politics of India*, Hutchinson, London 1967).

[29] Bendix, R. "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.9/3, April 1967, pp.292-346.

[30] Gusfield, J.R. "Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change", *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.72/4 (Jan, 1967), pp. 352-353.

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This problem is brought out well in Subrata Mitra's article, *Flawed Paradigms: Some Western Models of Indian Politics*[31] in which he analyses the discourse on Indian politics. Concluding his survey, Mitra identified two sets of difficulties: 'the fact that the root concepts around which (the paradigms) are organised are not germane to the experience that comes under their domain' and 'that there does not exist a comprehensive discourse on the Indian state within which India's cultural perception of the self could also be specified in terms of the political discourse of change'.[32] These writers played a crucial role in turning attention to context and in establishing that there were many routes to, and, many forms of modernisation. Tradition and modernity were thus seen as supplementing rather than supplanting each other, no longer defined as stark opposites or as 'mutually exclusive'.[33] Modern development, it was proposed, might even revive and integrate traditional features into the 'modern' reality.[34]

In response to these criticisms, attention was redirected towards the puzzle of why some traditional societies seemed to be better able to cope with modern change than others. A forerunner in this was S.N.Eisenstadt who in 1964 analysed the 'Breakdowns of Modernisation' in a likewise titled article. Drawing upon the concept of *social mobilisation*, Eisenstadt put forward the thesis that the internal structures of certain social groups, such as the tendency to minimise internal differentiation, were important for 'when these groups were pushed into new, modernised, and differentiated, urban, industrial and semi-industrial settings. They resulted in the perpetuation of previous "traditional" types of relationships'

[31] Mitra, S.K. Culture and Rationality, (Sage, London, 1999), pp. 39 – 63.
[32] Ibid. p.57.
[33] Bendix, R. "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, IX (April 1967), p.326.
[34] Heesterman, J.C. *The Inner Conflict of Tradition: Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship and Society* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1985), p. 9.

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and not the creation of viable new, differentiated institutional structures.[35] Eisenstadt claimed to have found a purely sociological analysis where, 'just as the predilection for change is necessarily built into any institutional system, so the direction and scope of change are not random but depend....on the nature of the system generating the change'.[36] Eisenstadt's work was crucial in drawing attention to the fact that societies which were successful at harnessing and promoting change, particularly modernising societies, were those which had the capacity for internal transformation, a process 'manifest in structural frameworks or cultural symbols that enable some groups to mobilise new forces and resources without necessarily destroying the existing structures.'[37] Referring to India, Eisenstadt observed how modernisation entailed a continuous re-crystallisation of traditional frameworks as for instance in the case of the caste system which had given way to 'more flexible networks of caste associations, organised around modern economic, professional and political activities'.[38]

Challenging the purely sociological perspective, Huntington's seminal *Political Order in Changing Societies*, published in 1968, argued that political change needed to be regarded as distinct from modernisation, and rather than being a correlate of modernisation, was often *impeded* by the latter. As a central hypothesis, Huntington proposed that the relationship between political participation and political institutionalisation determined the stability of a political system, regardless of the 'level' of economic or political development. An alternative to the stage-by-stage paradigm, Huntington represented a new wave of scholars

[35] Eisenstadt, S.N. "Breakdowns of Modernisation", *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 12(4), 1964 July, p. 359.
[36] Eisenstadt, S.N. 'Institutionalisation and Change', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 29 / 2 (April, 1964), p. 247.
[37] Eisenstadt, S.N. 'Transformation of Social, Political and Cultural Orders in Modernisation', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 30 / 5, (October 1965), p. 659.
[38] Ibid. p. 669.

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who concentrated on the functional features of political development.[39] Functional categories of comparison, applicable directly across national and cultural boundaries were constructed in contrast to the traditional country-by-country or area analysis based upon geographic, historical and institutional description. Proposing a 'functional theory of the political system' Gabriel Almond and James Coleman developed a formal model whereby differing empirical variations in the real world could be compared 'in terms of the frequency and style of performance of political functions by political structures'.[40] The core propositions made were: (i) all political systems have political structure; (ii) all political structure is multi-functional; (iii) all political systems are culturally mixed, none being all-modern and rational nor all-primitive and traditional; (iv) the same functions are performed in all political systems. To ask the comparative questions, seven functional categories were proposed: the four 'input' functions of political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation and political communication; the three 'output' functions of rule-making, rule-application and rule adjudication. With these tools of analysis, Almond and Coleman proposed in their introduction, 'to offer a comparative analysis of the political system of those areas in the world in which dramatic social and political change are taking place – Asia, Africa and Latin America'. Another example of a functional theorist, Lucien Pye, compiled a list of ten meanings commonly attributed to the idea of political development, including increasing equality among individuals in relation to the political system, increasing capacity of the political system in relation to its environment and, increasing differentiation of institutions and structures within the political system.[41]

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[39] Almond,G.A. and Coleman, J.S. (eds.) *The Politics of Developing Areas* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1960).
Almond & Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston, 1966).

[40] Almond, G.A. and Coleman, J.S. (eds.) *The Politics of Developing Areas* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1960), p. 62.

[41] Pye, Lucien W. *Aspects of Political Development* (Boston, 1966), pp.31-48.

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The early exponents of the functional approach nonetheless, continued to rely on a sequential understanding of political development moving towards a self-sustaining polity. Focusing on the distribution of power as a critical feature of the political development process, Harold D. Lasswell posited, 'A self-sustaining level of power accumulation is reached when the nation is able to furnish its own trained personnel, to achieve structural innovations with minimum resort to coercion, and to mobilise resources for national goals.'[42] Representative of this line of thinking include, for example, Morris-Jones's book, *Parliament of India*[43] which examined the extent to which the institution functioned successfully as a component of representative government. However, Morris-Jones was also amongst the first to caution that the student of political science 'should not assume, for instance, that institutions with familiar names are necessarily performing wholly familiar functions'.[44] Analysing the social backgrounds and behaviour of members of state and central legislatures, Morris-Jones examined the role played by parties in Parliament and the particular procedures and committees which had evolved from within the Indian system.

Similarly, Myron Weiner was also concerned with the ways in which people were inducted into new political processes. His studies of India's party politics drew attention to the crucial role political parties can play in providing stability once they were accepted by the citizenry as legitimate channels through which goals and aspirations can be satisfied.[45] Weiner was crucial in pointing out not only the importance of the Congress party but also the myriad of opposition parties confronting it and the dangers of factionalism. As Myron Weiner himself highlighted, at the heart of such analyses lie policy-oriented questions about the kind

[42] Lasswell, H.D. "The Policy Sciences of Development", *World Politics*, Vol.17/2 (Jan. 1965) p.290.
[43] Morris-Jones,W.H. *Parliament in India* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1957).
[44] Ibid. p. 2.
[45] See for example, Weiner,M. *Party Politics in India: the Development of a Multi-Party System* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957) and Weiner,M. *Party Building in a New Nation: the Indian National Congres*s (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967).

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of political institutions and practices can facilitate the emergence of a modern society. "How can values and attitudes be changed so as to mobilise people into voluntary corporate action on behalf of social and economic change? Who – administrators, political parties, legislators, businessmen, trade unions, religious associations, or other voluntary bodies – can mobilise people? And insofar as people are mobilised to participate...are they not also likely to increase their demands? How can one inculcate into organised groups the belief in some sort of public interest which would moderate the kinds of demands made and the techniques used to influence government, so that government can function with a minimum of recourse to coercive methods to maintain law and order?" [46]

In contrast, a comparative, historical school with a preference for variables such as classes, institutions and leadership emerged alongside. A representative scholar of this genre was Barrington Moore who, in his 1966 classic, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, distinguished between three patterns of modernisation: the bourgeois model (United States, England), the aristocratic (Japan, Germany) and the peasant (Russia, China). In this book Moore argued that the radically different costs and achievements of each model were explicable in terms of divergent patterns of social class development. One of the most important achievements of Moore's book was to bring together the study of both Eastern and Western history. The case of India was for Moore both puzzling and paradoxical. As a political democracy in an Asian setting and one without an industrial revolution India represented a paradox, 'a challenge to and a check upon the theories advanced in this book as well as others'.[47] The puzzle compared with the other cases, was how despite the odds (a rigid caste system, Oriental despotism, parasitic landlordism, stunted agricultural development) and without the prerequisites (commercial agriculture, a crown that was held in

[46] Weiner, M. "India's Political Future", *World Politics*, Vol.12/1 (Oct. 1959), pp103-119.
[47] Moore, B. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1993) , p. 315.

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check, a landed aristocracy that was reined in) India had evolved into a democratic political system. The price however, of an incomplete process of change, according to Moore, was the ongoing tendency of the Indian system towards backwardness, economic inefficiency and a disregard for high human costs. According to Moore, 'by the middle of the 1960s, India had no more than haltingly entered upon the process of becoming a modern, industrial society'[48] for rather than being a facilitator of change, democracy had become the elite's 'rationalisation for refusing to overhaul on any massive scale a social structure that maintains their privileges.' [49]

Providing a different reading of the Indian experience yet sharing a similar historically comparative methodology, Rajni Kothari's first book, *Politics in India*[50], examined the politicisation process. Differing from the European case, where political participation, he claimed, was confined to the upper classes of society and political activity was not a significant engine of change, India was also unlike the 'revolutionary experiments' of China and Russia where, for example, parochial identities were suppressed and competition disallowed.[51] Instead, he described the Indian model of development as the 'politicisation of a fragmented social structure through a penetration of political forms, values and ideologies....operating against the background of an essentially *apolitical* condition of society.'[52] By this Kothari was referring to India's long past of failed attempts at constructing a viable political authority, the building of a political centre.

[48] Moore, B. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1993), p. 413.
[49] Moore, B. Ibid (p.431).
[50] Kothari, R. *Politics in India* (Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1970) .
[51] Ibid. p. 9.
[52] Ibid. p. 11.

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The crucial variable Kothari identified 'was the crystallisation of a dominant political centre in the midst of plural identities'[53] as a result of the all-encompassing nationalist movement and the 'institutionalisation' of the dominant political centre, namely the Congress party. Combined with a political culture that was non-aggregative, India's experience with nation-building produced not a clash between tradition and modernity but rather a situation where modernity (could) survive only by becoming part of tradition, by "traditionalising" itself'.[54] This anticipated the literature which, much later on, was to speak of political power and political categories becoming *indigenised*.[55] Both scholars referred to here (Kothari[56] and Mitra[57] respectively) conceptualised politics as an unfolding process requiring institutional analysis and the incorporation of elite strategies.

This was an advance on the existing modernisation literature because Kothari provided for a variable that could explain the divergence *as well as* the convergence in the varying attempts of countries to attain political stability, social change and economic well-being. This variable was termed by Kothari, '*political institutionalisation'*, through which he explored the possibility of there being an Indian model consisting of a concerted effort to incorporate pluralities and segmentations without using methods of obliteration or marginalisation. Furthermore, unlike the evolutionary approach of early modernisation theory, Kothari identified 'a simultaneous rather than sequential model of development'.[58] As he puts it: 'In simultaneously pursuing the goals of political participation, social mobilization, and economic development, and at the same time trying to project a world image, the Indian

[53] Ibid. p. 420.
[54] Ibid. p. 93.
[55] See Mitra et al (eds.) *Political Parties in South Asia* (Praeger, Westport, 2004) for an application of this concept.
[56] Kothari, R. *Politics in India* (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1985), p. 6.
[57] Mitra, S.K. *Power, Protest and Participation: Local Elites and Development in India*. (Routledge, London, 1992).
[58] Kothari, R. *Politics in India* (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1985), p. 422.

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elite spread its energies too broadly on too many tasks but this also enabled it to articulate an incremental and cumulative style of nation-building which, because it focused on coalition-making, enabled it to contain the pressures that inevitably emerged with increasing politicisation.'[59]What this thesis sets out to do is precisely to investigate more closely the strategy of coalition-making which varied across the policy arenas of social reform, economic development and foreign policy and to assess the implications of this variation.

Among one of the first scholars to consider the case of India as the basis for producing a 'model of incremental change'[60], Kothari's *Politics in India* reflected a general trend that had taken root in political science. By the late 1960s, the study of political development had gradually changed from being a largely problem-driven subject to a theory-building exercise that was policy-oriented. In a landmark article in 1971, Huntington summarised this transformation succinctly: "the work of political scientists moved from a generalised focus on the political system to the comparative analysis of modern and traditional political system, to a more concrete concern with the discreet historical processes of modernisation and then back to a higher level of abstraction oriented toward general theories of political change."[61] Moving away from the notion of stages and a take-off into the self-sustaining polity[62], the idea of sequential challenges or crises gained popularity[63] which in turn was replaced by studies employing the "if…then…" approach.[64] This formulation

[59] Ibid, pp. 422-3.
[60]Ibid, p. 430.
[61] Huntington, S. (1971), p. 314.
[62] See for example, Lerner, D. *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernising the Middle East*, (The Free Press, Glencoe, 1958).
[63] For example, Binder, L., Coleman,J.S., LaPalombra,J., Pye,L.W., Verba,S. and Weiner,M. *Crises and Sequences in Political Development* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1971).
[64] LaPalombara, J. & Weiner, M. (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1966).

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implies a model sequence but suggests that variations from the expected pattern will produce problems that are in themselves predictable.

Again the dichotomous nature of tradition and modernity was criticised for producing a confusion over whether these were two concrete points in history, the former lying in the past and the latter, somewhere in the future, or whether in fact all societies were in transition, thus requiring a theory of the different forms and processes of change at work rather than a theory of stages. In effect, the earlier attempts to create clear categorisations produced a second generation of theorists who argued against the mutually exclusive nature of modernity and tradition and cautioned against the use of ideal types as manifestations of actual correlations. Latecomers, it was argued had an advantage, modernising rapidly by importing technology and borrowing from the experience of early modernisers, skipping whole stages of the previously imagined evolutionary process. Contradicting the idea of modernisation and political change being linear, these were portrayed as being part of a cyclical process, with major ups and downs.[65]

The problem however, continued to be the core assumption that political order was desirable in itself. Thus for Huntington, 'the primary problem is not liberty but the creation of a legitimate public order. Men may, of course, have order without liberty but they cannot have liberty without order. Authority has to exist before it can be limited….'.[66] As a result all forms of disorder were categorised as negative, as forces undermining the processes of political development that include literacy, urbanisation, economic growth and the demands for political participation. One direct consequence for the study of Indian politics has been

[65] See chapter 5 in the thesis which examines the ideology and politics behind the setting up of a Planning Commission in India.
[66] Huntington, S. *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1968), pp. 7-8.

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the tendency to portray any sign of political disorder as evidence of the break-down, disintegration or impending implosion of the country.[67] This was characteristic of academic writing in the 1980s which observed the declaration of Emergency rule by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the rise of separatist and insurgency movements within the country and the assassination of a prime minister. Writing in 1990 Atul Kohli described the growing un-governability of India in the following terms, 'The evidence for eroding political order is everywhere. Personal rule has replaced party rule at all levels…..Below the rulers, the entrenched civil and police services have been politicised. Various social groups have pressed new and ever more diverse political demands in demonstrations that often have led to violence'.[68] The critical challenge Kohli identified was the political incorporation of newly mobilised lower strata, additionally challenging at a time when the disintegration of India's major political institution, the Congress party. Like Rudolph and Rudolph in their classic, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi*[69], Kohli blamed a structural feature of Indian politics, the highly interventionist state, for the growing political disorder: 'If the role of the Indian state in India's development were minimal, if many of the country's pressing problems could be dealt with by social actors without the help of the state, then the state's relative ineffectiveness would not pose such a crisis.' [70]

This approach however, fails to take into account that crises may actually strengthen a political system and prove the resilience of institutions in the face of disorder. Furthermore, by not distinguishing between the *sources* of challenges to regimes, the analysis ends up

[67] See for instance Kothari, R. *The Crisis of the Moderate State* (1983), *A Fragmented Nation* (1983), *State Against Democracy* (1988), Kohli, A. *Democracy and Discontent: India's growing crisis of governability.* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990).

[68] Kohli, A. *Democracy and Discontent: India's growing crisis of governability.* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990), p. 3.

[69] Rudolph, L. and Rudolph, S. *In Pursuit of Lakshmi*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago,1987).

[70] Kohli, A. *Democracy and Discontent: India's growing crisis of governability.* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990), p. 379.

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treating all anti-regime opposition as being alike and takes for granted the mere fact of orderliness as desirable. Without any acknowledgement of the costs involved in upholding a particular order over another there is the risk of under-estimating the extent to which elites themselves might be willing to dismantle existing institutions in the interests of continued rule.

On the subject of institutionalisation, Huntington posited that strong institutions meant attractive values such as coherence, autonomy, complexity and adaptability. He writes, 'without strong political institutions, society lacks the means to define and to realise its common interests. The capacity to create political institutions is the capacity to create public interests'.[71] However, while under-institutionalisation or de-institutionalisation is seen as alarming, there is little concern expressed about the danger of *over*-institutionalisation leading to repression and rigidity.

Applying Huntington's thesis to the Indian case, Myron Weiner developed an 'index of institutionalisation'[72] which measured the percentage of candidates who forfeited their security deposits in the State assembly elections (a deposit required for the candidate to file his nomination and lost if the candidate failed to win one-sixth of the total vote). Weiner's own extensive work on Indian politics was heavily influenced by the political development school. Contributing in 1971 to the volume on *Crises and Sequences in Collective Theory Development* in the prominent *Studies in Political Development* series Myron Weiner focused on the growth of participation as a key variable determining political change. A participation crisis, defined by Weiner as 'a conflict that occurs when the governing elite views the

[71] Huntington, S. *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (1968), p. 24.
[72] Weiner, M. "Political Development in the Indian States" in Weiner, M. (ed.) *State Politics in India* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1968), p. 41

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demands of behaviour of individuals and groups seeking to participate in the political system as illegitimate.'[73], is interesting in terms of the various ways in which governing elites respond to such crises, the new institutions that may emerge from the resolution of a crisis and the dilemmas facing new participants who seek to enhance their influence within the political system.

A year later Paul Brass tested the hypothesis on a selection of Indian states to come to the conclusion that there was no law-like relationship between political participation / social mobilisation and political institutionalisation.[74] Additionally, James Manor, writing in 1990 pointed out the fact that 'to make a liberal political system work, it is no more necessary for them (the Indians) to be liberals than it is for them to be literates'.[75] Stability and resilience therefore were not to be seen as inevitable outcomes of mass participation and social mobilisation but rather the result of politics. Scholarship like that of Manor was crucial for bringing politics back into the picture, for drawing attention to the 'political accommodations, bargains and compromises'. [76]

As the above analysis has demonstrated, while advances and contributions were made to the study of Indian politics and India's political development through the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the basic conceptual framework did not alter. Authors considered here such as Rajni Kothari, Samuel Huntington, Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Rudolph, W.H. Morriss-Jones, each a classic in his own right, provide what are essentially structural-functionalist

[73] Binder et al, *Crises and Sequences in Political Development* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1972), p. 187.
[74] Brass, P.R. "Political Participation, Institutionalization and Stability in India", *Government and Opposition*, 1969 (10), pp. 23-53.
[75] Manor, J. 'How and Why Liberal and Representative Politics Emerged in India', *Political Studies* (1990), Vol. 38, p. 22.
[76] Ibid., p. 22.

www.historymarg.com

explanations for the resilience of India's political institutions and their ability to combine and transcend the modernity-tradition dichotomy. Hence, Morris-Jones writing in 1964 described India's political system as a 'mediating framework for a dialogue between the two inherited traditions of governance and movement'[77] and Rudolph and Rudolph, shortly thereafter, examined the capacity of India's modern institutions to tap into pre-colonial and pre-modern traditions.[78] Expanding their argument in 1987, they went on to explore other features of the Indian state such as its centrist nature which 'minimises the political salience of major cleavages'[79], the 'state-dominated pluralism'[80] where a multiplicity of social groups compete with one another under the overall hegemony of the state, an institutionalised system of conflict resolution with the state acting as the 'third party' or 'honest broker'[81] allowing conflict to be localised rather than spreading across the whole system. Identifying 'hinge groups' that bridged the modernity-tradition gap by drawing their legitimacy simultaneously from both, Rudolph and Rudolph explored the changing nature of caste associations and the emergence of new hybrid forms such as 'bullock capitalists' and the rise of a state which, 'Like Hindu notions of the divine,.....is polymorphous, a creature of manifold forms and orientations'.[82] Meanwhile authors such as Huntington in 1968 and Kothari in 1970 had developed theories focusing on the need for strong, stable institutions capable of withstanding the inevitable challenges of political and social mobilisation that was entailed in the process of modernisation.

[77] Morris-Jones *The Government and Politics of India*, (Hutchinson, London 1964), p. 126.
[78] Rudolph, L. & Rudolph, S., *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India*, (University of Chicago Press, London, 1967).
[79] Rudolph, L. and Rudolph, S. *In Pursuit of Lakshmi*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987), p.1.
[80] Ibid., p.247.
[81] Ibid., p.65.
[82] Ibid., p.400.

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While certainly enhancing the empirical evidence and advancing the sharpness of their theoretical models, the work of the above authors represents a dominant continuum within the study of Indian politics and political development born out of the West's historical experience and theoretical engagement with modernity and modernisation. Drawing upon a historical sequence of events, the structural approach envisioned grand processes such as nation-building and economic growth to be the forces contributing to a transformation of society and economy. Emerging from this, the 'functional paradigm'[83] demonstrated how particular features of India's social or political system served the functions of modern life as in the work portrayed above of Morris-Jones and Rudolph and Rudolph. Whilst revealing new and interesting features of the Indian case, these works remained firmly embedded within the structural perspective that identified the state as the central catalytic agent.

The views to emerge as a challenge to these, questioned the assumption of modernisation as an irreversible, linear process that could be set in motion once the institutional kernels were set in place or the argument that the mere destruction of traditional forms assured the development of a new, viable modern system. Having been dominated by primarily social accounts of change, the literature on political change, development and order finally gave way to a stream of writers from the 1970s on who sought to bring politics centre stage as an explanatory variable.[84] With this shift came an interest in the theory of agency. Ernst Gellner, attacking the Eurocentric assumptions of early modernisation theorists, argued that there was a tendency to confuse several distinct sets of features such as, characteristics specific to the *first* transition from traditional to modern, those specific to the *European*

[83] See Mitra, S.K. 'Flawed Paradigms: Some "Western" Models of Indian Politics' in Mitra, S.K. *Culture and Rationality* (Sage, New Delhi, 1999).

[84] See for example Kothari, R. *Politics in India* (Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1970); Brass, P.R. *The New Cambridge History of India: the Politics of India since Independence* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990); Frankel, F. & Rao, M.S.A. (eds.), Dominance and State Power in Modern India: decline of a social order. Vol.II (Oxford University Press Delhi, 1990).

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transition, characteristics of *any* transition and features of a *completed* transition to modernity.[85] Gellner's distinctions drew attention to a previously ignored dimension, the role of choice and ideology in the modernisation process and the importance of leadership in making strategic decisions. In the writings of Dore, Nettl and Robertson for example, modernisation itself is seen as the product of a *decision* to modernise.[86] Modernisation according to Nettl and Robertson, ought to be taken as a subjective, relativist term denoting the process by which national elites successfully consolidated their position within the state and moved toward equivalence with well-placed nations in the international system. The elite's perceptions of this goal depended on the values and exigencies of the international system on the one hand, and the values, dispositions and capabilities of the elites in the nation, on the other.

By the late 1970s a new shift had occurred with the emergence of rational choice and the 'new' institutionalist paradigm which addressed the role of choice and the constraints of context. These shall be reviewed in the subsequent chapter. The following account of Nehru biographies demonstrates how choice and context are necessary variables when trying to explain the causes and consequences of action.

[85] Gellner, E. *Thought and Change* (London, 1969), p.139.

[86] Dore, R.P., "The Late-Development Effect" in Evers, H.D. (ed.) *Modernisation in South East Asia*, (Singapore, 1973), pp.65 – 81. and Nettl, J.P. & Robertson, R., *International System and the Modernisation of Societies*, (New York, 1968) .

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1.4. *Nehruana* literature.

Seven biographies of Nehru will be reviewed in this section: Micheal Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography* (1959), Michael Edwardes, *Nehru: A Political Biography* (1971), B.R.Nanda, *Jawaharlal Nehru: Rebel and Statesman* (1995), S. Gopal's three-volume official biography, *Jawaharlal Nehru: a Biography* (1975 – 84), Stanley Wolpert's *Nehru: Tryst with Destiny* (1996), Judith Brown, *Nehru: a Political Life* (2003) and finally, Benjamin Zachariah, *Nehru* (2004). By making such a selection the intention is to examine whether interpretations or methods of analysis have changed over time. The copious amount of research on Nehru that exists varies a great deal in terms of the quality. In this section, the thesis examines a selection of biographies by well-known international as well as Indian scholars. Despite the shared medium of a chronological, narrative account of his person, the books do represent two broad 'generations' of *Nehru scholars*, something which will be clarified in the conclusion to this section. Literature that deals with specific aspects such as Nehru's economic thought or books that refer in more general terms to Nehru's policies and legacy will be incorporated into subsequent chapters.

Beginning with the earliest, Michael Brecher's political biography of Nehru, written during Nehru's lifetime, is a rigorous piece of work that draws upon a range of sources including official reports, Nehru's own writings, that of his contemporaries, newspapers and interviews with statesmen in Britain and India.[87] Avoiding a narrow focus on Nehru's person, Brecher takes the trouble to explain the institutional framework within which Nehru functioned as a political leader. Thus, his chapter on Planning and Welfare contains a perceptive description and analysis of the Planning Commission: its membership, its

[87] Brecher, M. *Nehru, A Political Biography* (Oxford University Press, London, 1959).

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functions and influence.[88] Reflecting on Nehru's role in policy-making, Brecher concludes that the Prime Minister was a 'most effective salesman of planning in the country as a whole' but that the many shortcomings of his programmes 'reflect in large measure the weaknesses of Nehru's policies and his frequent reluctance to act resolutely when forcefulness is necessary'.[89] Similarly, on foreign policy Brecher provides an insight into the policy-making process, examining the role of parliament, the cabinet, various 'interest groups' and key individuals, in addition to the exceptionally central role that Nehru occupied.

Writing in 1959 Brecher had yet to witness the failure of Nehru's approach towards China that culminated in the 1962 war but he detected the ambiguities in Nehru's position and strategy of non-alignment.[90] In many ways, Brecher's study is one of the more 'political' accounts of Nehru and his times. This is achieved by allowing for an analysis of the institutional mechanisms and inter-personal dynamics that characterised the newly installed democracy. Thus, in addition to the content of Nehru's beliefs and vision, the reader is given a vivid sense both of the substantive and procedural nature of Indian politics then. Out of the selection of books reviewed above this comes closest to a policy analysis of the Nehru period. Nevertheless the scope for further work remains, for Brecher mentions both the Hindu Code Bill and Panchasheela only in passing and his bibliography indicates that parliamentary debates were not consulted. As a result, Brecher seems to have intuitively found an approach that takes both actor and context into account, but without specifying a methodology and analytical framework.

[88] Ibid., p. 520.
[89] Ibid., p. 554.
[90] Ibid. pp. 588 -94.

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Similarly, Michael Edwardes' *Nehru, A Political Biography* which is full of insight, analysis and perceptive commentary is based upon a loose narrative structure which does not seek to explicitly prove anything. By the time the 1971 biography was complete, Edwardes had published on a range of historical subjects related to the subcontinent[91], a background which instils his writing about the freedom struggle with a breadth and depth that sets him apart from the other scholars reviewed here. Also, having been a live observer of pre and post-independence politics, Edwardes offers an unusual combination of the insider and outsider. His writing is not tinged by an unquestioning veneration of Nehru and his aim of presenting a 'political' biography is motivated by his inquiry into the *political* causes for action, choices and behaviour. For example, when discussing Nehru's second Congress presidency in 1936, a time when the recently formed Congress Socialist Party (CSP) was a powerful force within the Congress on the one hand while the right wing dominated the leadership, Edwardes observes how Nehru managed the situation: "He wanted national not factional leadership. He had noted that as the CSP had increased its influence inside the Congress so the right wing closed its ranks. He could best maintain his position by identifying with neither but by retaining the support of both Gandhi and the socialists."[92] A further interesting interpretation describes how Nehru, frustrated by the internal politics of the Congress was encouraged by his 'opponents' (Patel, Prasad, Rajagopalachari are referred to as the Eumenides[93] in Nehru's life) to seek refuge 'into the wider and more amenable reality of foreign policy.....It was an escape which hardly damaged the struggle for freedom

[91] See for example, Edwardes, M *High Noon of Empire: India under Curzon* (1965), *The West in Asia, 1850-1914* (1967), *Bound to Exile: The Victorians in India* (1969), *East-West Passage: the travel of ideas, arts and inventions between Asia and the Western World* (1971).
[92] Edwardes, M. *Nehru, A Political Biography* (Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1971), p. 114.
[93] Refers to the Furies who tormented Orestes in the play by Aeschylus.

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but after independence Nehru's preoccupation with foreign affairs was to lead to an abdication of decision on internal matters...".[94]

The lacuna in Edwardes' book is similar to that of the Wolpert biography for both authors choose to devote more than two thirds of their analysis to the pre-independence period, thereby neglecting the years of policy-making under Nehru's prime ministership. Edwardes is highly critical and cynical about the early years after independence, writing about the first elections as a 'travesty of democracy'[95], depicting the Nehru-Congress combine as an 'alliance of weakness' where "Congress had created Nehru and Nehru could have led only a party like Congress".[96] Without delving deeply into the debates surrounding policy-making within parliament or within the Congress party, Edwardes' assessment is rather harsh, seeing in Nehru's actions not the tactical politician but someone beset by indecisiveness who was "compelled to allow events to take their course, or to be directed on course by others more purposeful, until there was only one choice left to him to make."[97] Since Edwardes does not examine any particular policy in detail he does not portray the competing interests at stake nor the process through which Nehru built up his position via co-optation or polarisation. In the end, it is Nehru's weaknesses which stand out and not because they are flattering (which is often the interpretation presented by his admirers), for Edwardes paints a picture of a fallible leader, often misguided by others but quite capable of being misleading himself. Whilst Edwardes certainly presents a distinctive interpretation of the man and his times, the reader is not given a train of logic to follow in terms of the resources used, the assumptions being made about leadership and transition, and the constraints of context. The end result is a biography which reads like a gripping novel, partly inevitable given the

[94] Edwardes, M. *Nehru, A Political Biography* (Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1971), p. 118.
[95] Ibid., p. 248.
[96] Ibid., p. 245.
[97] Ibid., p. 255.

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extraordinary conditions it deals with, but also because, particularly in the case of the post-independence years, Edwardes simply focuses on dramatic and large-scale events like the Sino-Indian border war.

Sarvepalli Gopal's three volume-project is, technically speaking, a tour de force. Later, Gopal went on to edit a series of primary documents drawn from the Nehru family's private papers, Nehru's speeches and public writings, spanning Nehru's entire life. His particular interpretation is of interest here for in a final chapter, summarising Nehru's achievements, Gopal reveals his flagrant admiration for a man who 'consolidated a nation, trained it for democracy, constructed a model for economic development and set the country on the path to growth'.[98] Gopal ends by describing Nehru as "India's once and – we may hope – future king.'[99] Elevating Nehru to the heights of almost a super hero, Gopal's analysis loses credibility and value. The compromises, manoeuvring and politicking to which Gopal alludes to in the three volumes make for far more interesting reading, providing insights into the complex person that Nehru was and the multiple challenges of his times but these are mostly left un-elucidated. Instead, the leader whom he describes 'was a visionary as well as a planner', who combined 'intellectual and moral authority', a man in possession of such 'attractive failings' as 'the agonising continually in public over all aspects of every question, the open-mindedness carried to excess, the over-developed democratic instinct to carry all shades of opinion with him, the civilised self-doubt' begins to sound more like a caricature than a credible political actor.[100]

[98] Gopal, S. *Jawaharlal Nehru, A Biography* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1984), Volume 3, p.302.
[99] Ibid. p. 302.
[100] Ibid. p.299.

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So far, the three biographies above have exemplified a style of writing that was coloured heavily by the ideals through which Nehru was portrayed: Nehru as a moderniser, Nehru as the great leader and philosopher king. This can perhaps be accounted for by the fact that the authors lived through the Nehru years and were caught up in the euphoria and also, later the disappointments of the times.

B.R.Nanda on the other hand, represents the transition to a 'new' generation of Nehru scholars who sought to reduce the intensity of the spotlight on Nehru and to draw attention to his contemporaries and the impact of key individuals surrounding him. Adopting an essay-format, B.R.Nanda's *Jawaharlal Nehru, Rebel and Statesman* examines various aspects of Nehru's life, ranging from important personal relationships, to the conditions that shaped him and the intellectual themes that engaged him. Thus, Nanda emphasizes the mutually beneficial relationship to emerge between Nehru and Gandhi, pointing out how Nehru's political career was made by Gandhi's projecting him as Congress president at decisive junctures in 1930, 1936 and 1946. The Nehru-Bose relationship meanwhile is used to highlight what a more radical and impulsive Nehru might have looked like and behaved. On the themes of religion, partition, socialism, economic planning and non-alignment, Nanda expertly weaves together the personal experiences that shaped Nehru's thinking, the situational constraints he was up against and very briefly, the state policy he formulated. By not following a chronological narrative, Nanda produces a series of 'keyhole' images which seem to plunge the reader briefly but intensively into the times. For example in the chapter on 'Nehru and Socialism', Nanda refers to Nehru's own writings, the contemporaries who influenced him, the strategy of accommodation and compromise acquired through experience, and the 'mixed economy' approach that emerged as a result. Since all this is done

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in just nine pages it is naturally a brief account but is indicative of the potential for an analysis based on variables such as context, preferences and bargaining power.

Stanley Wolpert carries this approach further providing insights into the personal relationships between Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, Nehru and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Nehru and Krishna Menon, Nehru and Lord Mountbatten. A methodological contribution is also made by Wolpert, who draws upon the autobiographies, memoirs and biographies of Nehru's contemporaries and comrades to shed light on Nehru's life and times – a technique that the thesis also implements. Nevertheless it is surprising to note that Wolpert makes no mention of the Hindu Code Bills or Panchasheela, probably a reflection of the fact that the bulk of the book concerns itself with the pre-1947 period (27 out of the 32 chapters), a self-imposed limitation in response to the lack of primary material at the time that Wolpert conducted his research.

Judith Brown's 'Nehru' begins with a clear agenda. Claiming to adopt a different approach from other accounts of Nehru's life, Brown hopes 'to portray him in a broader context, as a man who belonged to a crucial generation in the history of Asia …It shows the diversity and complexity of the major issues which confronted them in a time of profound and unusually rapid transition'.[101] Furthermore Brown's study seeks to 'use his life as a window into Indian politics and shows how his work and concerns, his ambitions and failures can help the analysis of some of the deeper forces operating within the Indian polity'.[102] Like Zachariah, Brown regards Nehru as having had a critical bearing on India's political culture and thus divides the narrative into five chronological sections, 'each one deal(ing) with a special phase in Nehru's life, which also coincides with a particular phase in the development

[101] Brown, J. Nehru. A Political Life (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003), p. 2.
[102] Ibid. p. 4.

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of India's polity and politics'.[103] In this way Nehru becomes India and India, Nehru, a representation that can only be problematic as will emerge.

Brown opens her narrative with a brief background into the pre-Nehru context with a section titled, 'An Imperial Heritage, 1889-1920'. Whilst this is useful and unusual compared with the other biographies under review here, the attention to 'pre-history' does not continue throughout the book. As a result the reader is provided with the briefest of immersions into the workings of the British Raj and the kinds of problems and challenges as well as opportunities that were bequeathed to Nehru. The thesis on the other hand gives great emphasis to the importance of pre-history by providing a pre-independence background to each of the three policy areas. This is necessary because the policy dilemmas and debates that Nehru encountered and engaged with, were legacies of the colonial period.

Opting for a thematic framework, Brown hopes to redress the imbalance in biographical studies on Nehru where the focus is largely on the freedom struggle and not the issues Nehru himself considered vital during his prime ministership.[104] Thus, Brown examines the process of nation-building, dividing this into (a) 'the work of imagining the nation', (b) 'of structuring the nation and giving it political shape', (c) forging 'an expanded understanding and reality of shared nationhood' and finally (d) the task of installing the new nation in the international order.[105] Whilst this approach aims at weaving together the main events of Nehru's prime ministership together with the travails of actually running a government ultimately, Brown ends up concentrating on Nehru, the 'political visionary', the 'cosmopolitan intellectual who could see the broad picture and expound the significance of

[103] Ibid. p. 4.
[104] Ibid. p. 368 -9, n.2.
[105] Ibid. p. 187.

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issues facing India in sweeping historical terms.'[106] Like in so many other biographies of Nehru, the political manoeuvring that was necessary to maintain his position of power within the Congress party and the instrumentalisation of policy issues to establish his primacy in political debates, is over-shadowed by the portrayal of the greatness of his stature as an intellectual and leader. A further problem emerges with the image Brown creates in a final section, titled 'Frustration of Vision, 1957 – 1964', of an aging Nehru, from whose hands the reins of control were slipping and 'the demands of politics confronted the principled intellectual within Nehru's complex personality, causing hesitation, tension and often distress.'[107] The picture Brown paints of these years is that of a leader, increasingly stymied by opposition from within the party and the entrenched interests and inherent conservatism which came to the fore as Nehru weakened in health and spirit. However, because Nehru's own machinations within party and parliament are under-portrayed, there is a tendency to underplay the fact that to some extent these were constraints of his own making. The early years of his prime ministership need to be studied not only in light of the high principles and values he thought should be the mark of an independent India but also in terms of the compromises he inevitably had to make as a skilled politician and, as a result, the shortcomings in his vision.

Coming to the most recent biography, Zachariah opts for a more explicitly interpretive account. Unlike Wolpert who weaves a narrative based on fragments and excerpted quotations, Zachariah poses concrete questions to which he is trying to find an answer. In addition to rescuing Nehru from the mythologies that his supporters, detractors and even Nehru himself created, Zachariah emphasizes in the introduction, that the book must ask a vital question, namely, 'what were the social forces that made it possible for

[106] Ibid. p. 242.
[107] Ibid. p. 297.

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Nehru to rise to and to sustain his leadership in the Indian national movement?'[108] Providing the basis for the book, Nehru's rise to power, his leadership skills, during the period prior to independence and after, are explored from various angles. By examining the nature of leadership under colonial rule, Zachariah seeks to contextualise Nehru in terms of the resources available and the strategies that were common to the time. In a sub-section entitled, 'The Problems of Authenticity and Modernity', Zachariah highlights the challenges faced by Nehru and his contemporaries in justifying the call to universal rights of freedom and self-determination on the one hand while navigating indigenous notions of and paths toward modernity. This was compounded by the fact that these leaders were simultaneously negotiating the foundations for a future state as well as moulding the idea of a nation. As a study in leadership therefore, Nehru offers a window of analysis into the complexities and contradictions that are captured by the idea of a non-linear modernity.

Mid-way through his book, Zachariah interrupts the narrative to dwell on the transition to independence, a phase that is important in order to "examine the roots of what came to be called the 'Nehruvian vision' or the 'Nehruvian model', describing thereby what might be called the political culture of post-independence India."[109] Seeking a conceptual framework, Zachariah breaks down the task into the following components: the parameters of the discourse as represented in the Constituent Assembly debates, the institutional framework of the Indian National Congress and the imperatives of the time such as communal, identity politics, economic redistribution and the consolidation of India's sovereignty in the international realm. However, as will be noted further on, the book falls short in a number of ways, particularly in terms of its account and analysis of Nehru's political manoeuvring and

[108] Zachariah, B. *Nehru* (Routledge, London, 2004), p. xxiii.
[109] Ibid. p. 139.

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the arguments and alternatives put forward by Nehru's contemporaries on each of the issues that he concerned himself with, including foreign policy. While the latter is perhaps inevitable given the biographical focus on Nehru as the central character, the former weakness stems from the fact that few studies exist that dissect, chronologically and substantively, the conception, formulation and implementation of a particular policy during the Nehru era.

In his conclusion, Zachariah pronounces the "Nehruvian project" to a large extent to have been a failure but points out that there is a tendency to 'judge Nehru by standards far beyond those applied to most politicians….(perhaps because) he himself set the standards so high, and also perhaps because, as Nehru was and regarded himself as an intellectual, subsequent writers engage with him in the full splendour of intellectual combat, delighting in his inconsistencies and revelling in revealing his compromises."[110] This is where, surprisingly, Wolpert's study proves more insightful for he points out how Nehru was perfectly capable of engaging in the dirty business of politics but at the same time worked hard at maintaining a clean image. Thus, "Nehru never liked associating himself directly with any unscrupulous act, anything as immoral as throwing his 'friend' Sheikh Abdullah behind bars or forcing his most likely and best-qualified successor Morarji out of his cabinet into the political wilderness virtually on the eve of his demise."[111]

Another tendency towards over-simplification occurs in Zachariah's assessment of the 'successes' and 'failures' of the Nehruvian period where the reasons and evidence for failure

[110] Ibid. p. 262.

[111] Wolpert, S. Nehru. A Tryst with Destiny (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996), p. 489. These incidents refer to Nehru's decision to throw Kashmir's Chief Minister into jail from August 1953 when Sheikh Abdullah began to assert too much independence from the central government. He was kept in jail till Nehru's last days in 1964 The second incident refers to the ousting of key ministers under the *Kamaraj Plan* of 1963, widely believed to be a ploy through which to get rid of potential political contenders whom Nehru did not approve of.

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are listed as 'over-optimistic' targets for the Five Year Plans, an inability to tackle poverty because of the limited attention paid to human development, giving in to conservative opposition especially with regards social reform and finally, Nehru's betrayal of his own ideals particularly in compromising non-alignment through his aligning with China.[112] However, in his assessment of Nehru's 'unfinished business', Zachariah does not allow for the possibility that Nehru's compromises and half-hearted initiatives were also embarked upon for short-term gain, primarily that of consolidating and maintaining power. Seen from this angle they were highly successful for, on almost every count, Nehru managed to silence critics and disarm opponents. Zachariah refers to this element of strategic calculation in Nehru's behaviour when he describes him as 'the eternal coalitionist (who) appears to have been particularly adept at locking himself into coalitions with his opponents rather than his allies'[113] but as will become evident from the thesis, Nehru's tactics did not simply consist of coalition-building for, when necessary, he engaged in agenda-setting, bandwagoning and stalling procedures that left in its wake more polarisation than consensus. All in all, Zachariah's study of Nehru, while innovative in its overall approach, does not generate the kind of subtle insights which Wolpert and Gopal's more traditionally written biographies provide. Furthermore, despite the promising questions at the start of the book, Zachariah ends up under-estimating the tactical and strategic side to Nehru's actions and over-emphasizing the substantive content of the 'Nehruvian vision'.

Examining Nehru biographies reveals how little the field has moved since the late 1950s. There has been a tendency in the literature to repeat and embellish biographical details but not to generate *new* insights about Nehru, his politics and his times. This is possibly due to the fact that there has not been an attempt to apply fresh analytical approaches drawn from

[112]Zachariah, B. Nehru (Routledge, London, 2004), p. 263.
[113] Ibid. p. 259.

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the study of politics and research on changing societies or societies in transition. Furthermore, because Nehru is more often than not seen as a unique, great man of history, coupled with a tendency to neglect Indian politics of the 1950s as a topic in its own right, there has been a propensity to focus on the man and not to critically examine his actions or context.

Nevertheless it is possible to distinguish between two 'generations' of Nehru scholars. Writers like Brecher, Edwardes and Gopal share the experience of having been contemporaries of Nehru, either observing his politics first hand or, as in Gopal's case, as a public official.[114] As a result they approach the subject matter with a natural sensitivity for the context, aware of the many pressures as well as the historic opportunities that Nehru had as prime minister. Hence their writing is unconsciously mutli-layered. Authors like Judith Brown, Stanley Wolpert and Benjamin Zachariah on the other hand represent a shift towards a more systematic study of the man and his times but at the same time are coloured by a sense of nostalgia for bygone days. The new element in more recent writing has been to use Nehru as a means through which to understand the present or as Brown puts it, 'how India has come to be what it is and to demonstrate some of the resources with which it faces still critical domestic issues as well as those with major international dimensions'.[115] Nevertheless the general trend has been towards an ever-greater magnification of Nehru's vision at the expense of deciphering Nehru's tactical and strategic behaviour as a political actor. As a result, Nehru has remained the country's philosopher king, the ideal leader who combined virtue and wisdom.

[114] From 1954 to 1966 S.Gopal worked for the Ministry of External Affairs.
[115] Brown, J. Nehru. A Political Life (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003), p. 345.

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Not only has this hindered research about Nehru but it has also created a dearth in the writing on the politics and policies of the 1950s as will become evident in subsequent chapters that focus on the case studies and the literature available in the relevant policy field. A deeper exploration of the way in which policy was shaped in the 1950s, the alternatives that were foregone and the interests that became congealed in the policy-making process, is of crucial importance. The decade of the 1950s marked a critical period of transition, moving from the trappings of colonial rule to the infrastructure of an independent, democratic system of government. Although the process had started much earlier, the negotiation of core values (such as secularism, socialism and non-alignment) went through a crucial phase during the early 1950s when policies were being formulated and implemented by an independent Indian government for the first time and institutional constraints were respected, undermined and remade in the process. In its conclusion the thesis will make the case that the 1950s, (and this is not simply reducible to Nehru alone), represents the wellspring of India's modern politics in terms of the resources and interests that continue to set the terms of debate and the limits to policy-making.

The 'next generation' of scholarship on Nehru ought to be one that aims at combining the intuition of those firsthand witnesses with the more analytical approaches of later writers. With this as its aspiration, the thesis has invested much time in exploring the context as well as developing a theoretical framework to guide the analysis.

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1.5. Conclusion.

The foregoing survey has demonstrated that early proponents of the 'modernisation paradigm' in the social sciences failed to explain the divergence in political development amongst countries as opposed to the convergence they had predicted that modernisation would bring about. Using India as a test case, scholars examined the ways in which tradition re-invented itself and modernity took on local features to propose theories about the indigenisation process, the 'idioms' of politics and the importance of history. Nevertheless what remained under-explained was why breakdowns and setbacks occur in the form of political violence and the use of coercion, or, why religion retained its political saliency and economic growth remained un-sustainable? One explanation to emerge from within Indian political science was the 'deinstitutionalisation' hypothesis which adopted a moral undertone in arguing for the need to resurrect institutions of the state, returning them to their original stature during their heyday of the Nehru era. As pointed out by Subrata Mitra, the deinstitutionalisation thesis failed to address the "all important question of the *cause* of the structural discontinuity....its proponents are able to offer explanations only in terms of political styles and motives of key actors ...the issue of the state's ability to regenerate itself (is not) raised with any degree of seriousness".[116]

Furthermore, the survey of biographical material on Jawaharlal Nehru demonstrates how generally blinkered the scholarship has been of Nehru's brand of parliamentary democracy following independence, as a result of which few innovative insights have been generated from the extensive research that has gone into the bookshelves of Nehruana literature. This, the thesis has argued, is a weakness that stems from the underlying

[116] Mitra, S.K. "The Paradox of Power: Political Science as Morality Play", The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics , 26(3), November 1988, p. 333.

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methodological and epistemological position adopted by the authors, a position that tends to under-value the politics of the time and the compromises that were struck. Mitra points out in his essay, *Crisis and Resilience in Indian Democracy*, "The years from 1950 to 1967 were the years of solid Congress dominance. Although the opposition parties did not alternate with the dominant party in controlling the government, their exclusion from the formation of public policy was more formal than real....This was the basic characteristic of the dominant party system which distinguished it from a one-party state as well as from a multiparty system."[117] Though political competition was thus 'internalised' it nevertheless continued and Nehru had to be the skilled politician that he was to maintain control and consolidate his dominance.

Examining the *resilience* of India's institutions over time, Mitra applies what he terms, 'critical traditionalism' which "conceptualises governance as germane to all societies. Changing environments require changes in the rules of governance, changes which, to be legitimate, need to be drawn from the political tradition of the given society."[118] From such a standpoint, he then develops an empirical model of governance based on four sets of parameters: "a bureaucratic state machinery which combines policy responsiveness with law and order management; contribution to agenda setting by local protest movements; political elites using two track strategies that combine protest and participation, and constitutional change as a political resource".[119]

As demonstrated, a literature survey reveals the extent to which Jawaharlal Nehru is portrayed as a founding father of the modern Indian nation-state. Whilst misjudgements and

[117] Mitra, S.K. "Crisis and Resilience in Indian Democracy" in Mitra, S.K. *Culture and Rationality. The Politics of Social Change in Post-colonial India.* (Sage, New Delhi, 1999), p. 383.
[118] Mitra, S.K. "Crowds and Power: Democracy and the Crisis of 'Governability' in India" in Mitra, S.K. *Culture and Rationality. The Politics of Social Change in Post-colonial India.* (Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1999), p. 373.
[119] Ibid. p. 365.

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mistakes in his policy choices are recognised, these are usually cast in terms of his having been misled, either by advisors or adversaries. The result has been a largely hagiographic interpretation of Nehru and his legacy whilst those who have been more critical have not delved deeply enough to explain the reasons behind his choices. To imply that Nehru simply made unfortunate or even incompetent decisions, leading for instance to an unwanted and unforeseen war with China in 1962, does not help us understand why alternative actions were rejected. To counter this view the chapter has made the following argument, that choice, as much as context and contingency, determines policy content and output. This is what the thesis seeks to demonstrate.

In many ways, this thesis follows in the footsteps of Sunil Khilnani whose book, *The Idea of India* is unusual in its unabashed acknowledgement of the importance of politics and the political skills of its actors. Khilnani's introduction draws attention to two central variables: 'the conditions of political competition in India (and) the identity of the competitors'.[120] Jawaharlal Nehru is analysed in terms of both and Khilnani is one of the view observers of Indian political history to state that Nehru was not only a product of his times but also an astute, skilled political actor whose vision 'emerged through constant practical adjustments in the face of political contingencies.'[121] Most crucially, Khilnani demonstrates how contingencies such as partition and the mass communal killings, the early crisis over Kashmir served to reinforce, in the mind of Nehru, the need for a strong state. In fact he goes as far to state that 'Constitutional democracy based on universal suffrage did not emerge from popular pressure....nor was it wrested by the people from the state; it was given to them by the political choice of an intellectual elite.' [122]

[120] Khilnani, S. *The Idea of India* (Penguin Books, London, 1998), p. 13.
[121] Ibid., p. 30.
[122] Ibid., p. 34.

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Having explored the theoretical framework provided in the modernisation literature it was concluded that this genre had been dominated by structural-functionalist explanations which fail to take into account the role of choice and strategy. Instead the thesis formulates a hypothesis that embraces both agency and context by proposing three explanatory variables: Vision, Strategy and the Structure of opportunities. The first two it is argued act as causal mechanisms or intervening variables through which the effects of context are mediated, producing a particular sequence of events or process of decision-making and policy-selection that determines the final shape of a policy and has implications for its further evolution. This proposition serves as a heuristic device with which the three examples of policy choices selected here are examined. To what extent such an approach, which is based on rational choice theory and the 'new institutionalist' and 'historical' turn in political science of the 1980s and 1990s, can help uncover new data and a fresh perspective on the preferences of actors and their perceptions of the costs and benefits about possible outcomes, is the subject of the following, chapter two.

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Chapter Two

Epistemology, Theory and Methodology

2.1. Introduction.

2.2. Rationality, methodological individualism and the 'Cunning of Reason'.

2.3. New Institutionalism & Path Dependence: explaining inefficiencies in history.

2.4. The Analytic Narrative and *Historical* Institutionalism.

2.5. Path Dependency and Policy Studies.

2.6. Designing a model: vision and strategy in policy-making.

2.6.1. The Puzzle: designing stable institutions in times of change.

2.6.2. The Hypothesis: vision and strategy as inputs.

2.6.3. The *Explanandum*: policy outcomes and institutional resilience.

2.6.4. The Unit of Analysis: three cases of policy-making.

2.6.5. The Sources for data collection.

2.7. Conclusion: the methodological challenges of working on a historical figure.

2.1. Introduction

This chapter intends to extract Nehru, the political actor, from the primary material available. For this, some tools of analysis about political action is required. Hence, the chapter begins with a discussion of rational choice and new institutionalist approaches and the insights these have generated. Following this, the analytic narrative as a method is presented together with the contributions that the school known as *Historical Institutionalism* has made towards incorporating time and sequence, also known as *path dependence,* into the

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analysis of politics. Finally, a model is proposed, drawing upon the actor's perceptions and strategic context to explain policy choices and in the longer-run, their institutionalisation.

2.2. Rationality, methodological individualism and the 'Cunning of Reason'.

Emerging in response to the style of political analysis described in chapter one which focused either on grand processes or the idiosyncratic details of rare and influential events, rational choice theory was taking shape in the 1950s and 60s. Focusing on individual decision making as the source of collective political outcomes, its main postulate was that individuals are driven by the logic of rational, self-interest. In contrast to the grand theories of political development and change, the rational choice approach aimed at 'thin' descriptions generating positive statements about political phenomena that could be empirically verified. Individuals were assumed to rank their preferences consistently over a set of possible outcomes, taking risk and uncertainty into consideration and acting to maximise their expected pay-offs. As a result a specific motivation behind action was identified in the form of *interests*. The goal then became to build models that predicted how individuals' self-oriented actions combined to produce collective outcomes through the use of game theory and mathematics.[123] A central assumption used in such theory-building exercises was the notion of equilibrium, a stable outcome at which point no individual could achieve a greater (expected) payoff if he had unilaterally selected an alternative course of action. This was an important idea because it

[123] Early proponents include Von Neumann & Morgenstern, *The Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour* (1944), Duncan Black's 'On the Rationale of Group Decision-Making' (1948), Kenneth Arrow's *Social Choice and Individual Values* (1963/ 1951) and Anthony Downs *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (Harper, New York, 1957), William H.Riker's *The Theory of Political Coalitions* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1963), Buchanan & Tullock's *The Calculus of Consent* (1962), Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965). For an early application to Indian politics see Mitra, Subrata K. *Governmental Instability in Indian States*. (Ajanta Press, New Delhi, 1978) and 'A theory of governmental instability in parliamentary systems', *Comparative Political Studies*, 13:2 (July 1980), pp. 235-263.

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supported the contention that political processes could result in predictable, stable social outcomes, given the constraints imposed by the situation.

In a key text of the time, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*, William Riker advocated a science of politics by building up deductive structures derived from intuitively justified axioms, to be then subjected to empirical tests. The central contention of his approach was that the rational actor in a political arena, acts strategically and intentionally, calculating how to achieve his aims in a given environment. In other words, the theory of rational choice was to rest upon the idea of methodological individualism, where the individual consciously takes into account stimuli and constraints and acts in a deliberate, rational not mechanical manner. In a minimal sense, rationality was taken to mean goal-oriented behaviour.

Reacting to the behavioural movement of the 1960s, 'bounded rationality' advocated a shift in focus, away from solely examining the external situation of the actor to a closer study of the internal, mental schemata that determined the limits to an actor's rationality. To judge whether an act was rational or not, bounded rationality argued that it was necessary to know the actor's goals, his/her conceptualisation of the situation and abilities to draw inferences from the available information. Attaching greater weight to the mental process of decision- making the emphasis shifted from a study of outcomes, to a study of process. Pointing to the phenomena of 'satisficing' behaviour, scholars such as Herbert Simon developed what is known as the *procedural* model of rationality, presenting an explanation for *how* people conduct incomplete searches and make tradeoffs between values. A central contribution of Herbert Simon was to direct attention away from looking purely at the *results*

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of rational choice to examining the *process* of choice.[124] As Simon points out the analyst needs to be as much concerned with the characteristics of the rational actor as with the characteristics of the objective environment within which he makes his decisions. In other words, 'we must give an account of *substantive* rationality – the extent to which appropriate courses of action are chosen – but also *procedural* rationality – the effectiveness, in the light of human cognitive powers and limitations, of the procedures used to choose actions.'[125] The thesis adopts bounded rationality as its overarching understanding of human action and hence the following five assumptions are central to the analysis undertaken:

1. Rational behaviour is adaptive given the constraints of the external situation and the capacities of the decision-maker.
2. Actors search for alternatives, consequences and information in a selective and incomplete manner based on their limited and uncertain access to information.
3. Decisions are made once a satisficing alternative is found: the choice need not be the optimal one but merely the one that satisfices some minimal need.
4. Understanding behaviour requires extensive knowledge about the actor's goals and conceptual orientation to the world.
5. The decision-making process is to be highlighted in order to understand the rationality behind the choice rather than the outcome itself[126].

The thesis seeks to explain 'large' events like the emergence of the Planning Commission, India's particular strategy of economic development and foreign policy choices by starting with the level of the individual and hence adopts an epistemological standpoint of

[124] Bell, D.E. et al (eds.) *Decision-Making. Descriptive, normative and prescriptive interactions*. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989), p. 60.
[125] Ibid., p. 67.
[126] The five points are drawn from Monroe, K.R. (ed.) *The Economic Approach to Politics. A Critical Reassessment of the Theory of Rational Choice*. (HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 1991), p. 6.

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methodological individualism. For Weber, methodological individualism "treats the single individual and his action as the basic unit, as its 'atom'".[127] More specifically, methodological individualism follows a subjective, interpretive epistemology where understanding or *'verstehen'* is achieved when we, as the observer, know the subjective meaning that individuals attach to their own action. Ontologically, the important implication Weber made was that it is only individuals who attach a subjective meanings to their actions and hence emerges the epistemological thesis that all knowledge about society derives from knowledge about individuals. As an advocate of methodological individualism in the social sciences, Max Weber considered it possible to use the social scientist's unique relationship with his material to gain scientific insight. The scientific method, according to Weber, requires the reduction of a phenomenon to its components, but the reduction needed to be carried out to the appropriate level and not further. Thus, for the study of social phenomena, reduction to the level of individual consciousness was required in terms of the rational and purposive actions of the individual and not to a further level of biological factors. Combined then, with a technique of 'verstehen' it would be possible to explain action in terms of factors that are immediately familiar to everyone.

Core concepts used by the individual methodologist include describing a person as having 'motives', 'tastes' and 'beliefs'. The first of these refers to that which is valued by the actor, the end or ends he hopes to achieve through his actions. While general motives might be the same, two individuals may hold very different tastes, in terms of the specifics. Finally, beliefs refer to the probability that individuals hold that an action will, in fact serve to realise motives, or in other words, the knowledge possessed of the relevant relations of cause and

[127] Weber, M (1913) 'Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology', *The Sociological Quarterly,* 1981, (Spring, Vol. 22/2), p. 158.

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effect. In chapter three a 'cognitive map'[128] takes into account these various dimensions and is applied to Jawaharlal Nehru's understanding of key political issues. This will draw upon the idea of *spatial* models in political science which depict who, is close to whom, by breaking people and rhetoric down through an analysis of where they stand on major issues and cleavages.

However, while making the assumption of situational rationality, i.e. that one may explain human actions by construing them to be the result of decisions that rational persons would make, it is not contended that they were compelled to make them. As a result it becomes of vital importance to examine what alternatives might have been considered, or were seen as options at the time. In doing so, the thesis treads a fine line between history and the social sciences, the former tending towards the claim that events cannot be explained through model-like causal relationships and the latter, aspiring towards a more 'scientific' approach.

A strong criticism launched by historians against the social sciences is that it distorts reality, encouraging an overly deterministic interpretation of events at the expense of human freedom and the role of contingency. Perhaps as a via media it is possible to take something from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's idea of 'the cunning of reason'[129], an elaboration of Giambattista Vico's argument that Providence realises its intent through the history that men make by their actions. Men are free to act, but the desires that motivate them (as social beings) are part of a cosmic plan. Removing the metaphysical dimension, the core insight

[128] The cognitive map is borrowed from Axelrod's work in which it is defined as „the structure of the causal assertions of a person with respect to a particular policy domain", Axelrod, *Structure of decision: the cognitive maps of political elites*. (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976), p.58. For more on this please see chapter three.

[129] A concept that emerges from Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980).

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remains a useful one: Men are free to act but the desires that motivate them stem from a larger, overarching structural context. Political philosophers have long discussed the constraints to human freedom whether in the form of metaphysics as above, Hegel's application of the zeitgeist, Karl Marx's view of history as class struggle or Jean-Paul Satre's existentialist depictions of the human condition. The position adopted in the thesis is that political institutions define a 'political space' as well as the temporal period within which decision, resolution, conflict or compromise take place, providing the setting wherein the activities of individuals and groups are connected.

2.3. New Institutionalism & Path Dependence: explaining inefficiencies in history.

Developed from within the rational choice discourse, 'new institutionalism' began to take shape in the late seventies and early eighties through the work of acclaimed scholars such as Shepsle (1979), Shepsle and Weingast (1984, 87) and Riker (1980). Their main contribution was to move away from the previously-held assumption of rational choice and behavioural theorists, namely the tendency to take the institutional structure as given. This was done partly in the hope of achieving a parsimonious theory where the sources of preferences and beliefs would be left un-explained, for otherwise, it was warned, there was the danger of rendering all explanation hostage to idiosyncratic detail. As a result institutions, including electoral system, courts, and legislatures were seen as time and location-bound and non-generalisable. The overly atomised conception of man that was generated came to be questioned by the 'new institutionalists' who sought to return context and structure to the analysis. As Shepsle has pointed out, by suppressing any institutional component, rational

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choice modelling was precariously based upon a single and simple rule of preference aggregation.[130]

As the name indicates, the '*new*' institutionalists distinguished themselves from an 'old' form of institutionalism which, had attributed a central role to political institutions but did not offer a testable explanation of how institutions mirrored and shaped political life. Defined by Olson and March in a critical article on the subject, 'new' institutionalism involved 'blending elements of an old institutionalism into the non-institutionalist styles of recent theories of politics.'[131] Where rational choice saw political outcomes as a function of three primary factors: the distribution of preferences (interests) among political actors, the distribution of resources (powers), and the constraints imposed by the rules of the game (constitutions), each exogenous to the political system, new institutionalism argued for endogeneity. Preferences and meanings developed within the process of politics, through a combination of education, indoctrination and experience, political institutions affected the distribution of resources and constitutions, laws, contracts and customary rules of politics made some alternatives more legitimate than others.[132]

Challenging the assumptions underlying modernisation theories which envisioned order as imposed by reason (the obvious route to progress) or achieved through a mix of competition and coercion, the new institutionalist school offered additional notions of political order, raising questions about how institutions came to be selected and what sustained them. Most importantly, the writers in this genre offered an interpretation of the

[130] Shepsle, K.A. "Studying Institutions: some lessons from the rational choice approach." *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 1989, 1(2), pp. 131 - 47.
[131] March, James & Olson, Johan, 'The New Institutionalism: Organisational Factors in Political Life', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 78/3 (Sep. 1984), p. 738.
[132] Bacharah, Peter and Baratz, Morton 'Decisions and Non-Decisions: An Analytical Framework', *American Political Science Review, Volume 57*, 1963, pp. 632 – 42.

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inefficiencies of history, where historical processes could result in outcomes that were sub-optimal. Thus, theoretical research was needed into how institutions affected things like power distribution, the range of preferences or the management of resources. Institutions, it was proposed became 'carriers of wisdom' or 'forms of irrational retrogression'.[133]

By the late 1980s two main lacunae had been identified in the rational choice and new institutionalist scholarship which acted to stimulate further research: (1) how to explain preference-*formation* and (2) how to theorise about the *origins* of institutions and their varied ability to adapt in the long-run to changed conditions or to withstand internal and external shocks. The dominant response in political science to this latter challenge had been to resort to functionalist reasoning that the explanation of institutional forms was to be found in its functional consequences for those who created them. For example, in Oliver Williamson's work on transaction costs the argument is made that organisations take on a particular institutional form as a result of rational actors trying to reduce transaction costs.[134] The problem with such an approach is that it ignores the more interesting questions pertaining to change and resilience. Furthermore institutions are again simply taken as given - either endowed or imposed from above, the assumption being that institutions exist in the form they do because they perform particular functions for social actors. Hence the task of the analyst became one of laying bare the function that the institution was meant to serve (usually, the resolution of some kind of collective action problem).[135] Rational Choice theorists are

[133] March, James & Olson, Johan, 'The New Institutionalism: Organisational Factors in Political Life', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 78/3 (Sep. 1984), p. 745.
[134] See for instance, Williamson, O.E. 'The Economics of Organisations – the Transaction Costs Approach.' *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 48/3 (Nov. 1981), pp. 548 - 77.
[135] Pierson, 'The Limits of Design: Explaining Institutional Origins and Design' in *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration* Vol.13/4 (October 2000), p. 477.

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criticised for making it possible to reconcile virtually any observed outcome with a functionalist account.[136]

As one of the most famous representatives of the new institutionalist school, the Nobel-prize winning economic historian, Douglas North explored the link between institutional constraints and economic performance, asking why some countries seem to get it right and others, despite the same formal constraints experienced different results.[137] Taking up the puzzle of divergence among institutional frameworks and the persistence of 'inefficient' institutions, North argued that in a world lacking perfect competition and characterized by imperfect information, and increasing returns to scale, 'not only can both divergent paths and persistently poor performance prevail, the historically derived perceptions of the actors shape the choices that they make.'[138] Essentially therefore, North recognised the impact of subjective preferences and cognitive devices that go into the actors' interpretations of the world and choice of best action to maximise utility. The choices may very well be 'inefficient' but also have to be seen in context of a longer-drawn out process constrained by 'network externalities, the learning process of organisations, and the historically-derived subjective modelling of the issues'.[139] In other words, North proposed an explanation where *increasing returns* and *path dependence* yielded predictions about short-term choices as well as providing a causal story for the direction of long-term change.

[136] See Green & Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*, (Yale University Press, 1994) for a critical evaluation of the use of rational choice theory in political science.
[137] North, Douglas *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (1990, Cambridge University Press).
[138] Ibid. pp. 95-96.
[139] Ibid. pp. 99.

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Drawing upon models explaining technological change[140], political scientists have borrowed the intuitively interesting idea that politics, like technology, involves some element of chance (agency and choice) but that once a path is taken, it can become 'locked in', as all the relevant actors adjust their strategies to accommodate the prevailing pattern. As Paul Pierson points out, the notion of path dependence generally refers to the following key claims: "(1) specific patterns of timing and sequence matter, (2) starting from similar conditions, a wide range of social outcomes may be possible, (3) large consequences may result from relatively 'small' or contingent events, (4) particular courses of action, once introduced, can be virtually impossible to reverse, and (5) political development is often punctuated by critical moments or junctures that shape the basic contours of social life."[141]

Each of the above, challenges the older assumptions and propositions that constituted the modernisation school, for instance the then-prevalent idea that 'large' causes like urbanisation or industrialisation explained 'large' outcomes like modernisation. Similarly, most modernisation scholars attributed very little importance to the capacity of rational actors to design and implement optimal solutions (given their resources and constraints) to the problems that confronted them. Path dependence, as Pierson points out, draws attention to the dynamics of increasing returns and the tendency in political life towards *positive feedback*. Douglas North, drawing on research in cognitive psychology and organisational theory, argued that actors operate in contexts of high complexity and opacity and are heavily biased in the way they filter information into existing 'mental maps'.[142] Confirming information

[140] The most well-known being that associated with the case of the 'QWERTY keyboard' and the argument developed by David, 1985.

[141] Pierson, Paul 'Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics', The American Political Science Review, Vol. 94/2 (June, 2000), p. 251.

[142] See North, Douglas, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), Denzau & North, 'Shared Mental Models: Ideologies and Institutions', *Centre for the Study of Political Economy*, University of Washington, 1994.

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tends to be incorporated while disconfirming information is filtered out. Social interpretations of complex environments like politics it was argued were especially subject to positive feedback, as opposed to arenas of economic interaction where decreasing returns of scale were observable. Applied to institutions, Pierson speaks of the institutional 'stickiness of politics', the difficulties of actually achieving change which in fact can be seen as an intended consequence of designers who think in terms of binding their successors for these might also one day include political rivals. Recent work on path dependence examines how initial institutional decisions, even suboptimal ones, can become self-reinforcing over time.[143] These initial choices encourage the emergence of elaborate social and economic networks, or as North termed it, an 'institutional matrix'[144], greatly increasing the cost of switching to once-possible alternatives and thereby inhibiting exit.

Initially applied by economists to explain, for instance, the development of modern capitalism, as Douglas North did, the idea of increasing returns (or positive feedback) is used to demonstrate how established institutions generate powerful inducements that reinforce their own stability and further reproduction. For political science the implications were of particular interest given the nature of political life which is marked by the collective action problem, a density of institutions, power asymmetries and opacity. Thus as Pierson puts it, path dependency allows for new questions to be raised about politics, turning the 'focus on branching points and on the specific factors that reinforce the paths established at those points' as well as raising new answers, for instance the increasing returns argument which

[143] North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), See S.D.Krasner, *Sovereignty, Organised Hypocrisy* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999) for an application of this insight to institutions in international relations.

[144] North, D. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 95.

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'provide(s) a plausible counter to functionalist explanations'.[145] For rather than simply assume that the persistence of an institution has something to do with its purpose, it becomes interesting to explore what the alternatives might have been as well as the possibility that the institution was an accidental outcome and its particular shape, an unintended consequence. Reinforcing the new institutionalist interest in *process* as opposed to focusing solely on outcomes, path dependence argues that history matters not because of 'the past per se, but the unfolding of processes over time that (becomes) theoretically central.'[146]

2.4. The Analytic Narrative and *Historical* Institutionalism.

Historical Institutionalism, which claims to use the 'comparative historical method to sort out the causal mechanisms behind observed empirical patterns'[147], has generated valuable insights. These include the notion that political processes can best be understood if they are studied over time; that structural constraints on individual actions, especially those emanating from government, are important sources of political behaviour; and that the detailed investigation of carefully chosen, comparatively informed case studies is a powerful tool for uncovering the sources of political change.[148]

One of the core claims of historical institutionalism has been that institutions do more than channel policy and structure political conflict, for the very "definition of interests and

[145] Pierson, Paul 'Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 94/2 (June, 2000), p. 263.
[146] Ibid. p. 264.
[147] Thelen, K. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1999 /2, p. 372.
[148] P.Pierson, 'When Effect Becomes Cause: Policy Feedback and Political Change' *World Politics*, Vol.45 / 4 (July 1993), p. 596.

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objectives is created in institutional contexts and is thus not separable from them".[149] This can be seen as a direct contrast to 'hard' rational choice theories which begin with a universal, not context-specific, assumption of rationality. However, there are problems with the hard core version of rational choice in that there is nothing comparable to the economic dictum of getting the most for the least of one's money in the marketplace. As a result much of the criticism of rational choice theory rests on its assumption and conceptualisation of rationality. How to incorporate a definition that allows for both material and ethical factors remains a central challenge in the literature. While utility or wealth-maximisation assumptions produced general and parsimonious theories, the danger was that it could also produce tautology in that whatever people do becomes a 'revealed preference'.[150] This is a method which posits that the preferences of actors can be revealed by their behaviour but it assumes that such preferences hold a normatively 'true' status, thus ignoring the effect of decision-making errors, miss-information, miss-perception etc.

Like in rational choice, it is also possible for historical institutionalist analysis to be 'actor-centred' in the sense that the players are defined as "any individual or composite actor that is assumed to be capable of making purposeful choices among alternative courses of action".[151]To be persuasive it needs to be proven that the actors are players in the sense that their actions are cohesive and strategic. Through in-depth empirical work, the historical institutionalist aims at conducting such a deeply micro-foundational study.

[149] Zysman, J. 'How Institutions Create Historically Rooted Trajectories of Growth', *Industrial Corporate Change*, 1994, Volume 3/1, p. 244.
[150] Levi, M. "A model, a method and a map: rational choice in comparative and historical analysis' in Lichbach & Zuckerman, eds. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure*. (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1997), p. 24.
[151] Scharpf, F.W. *Games Real Actors Play* (Boulder, Westview, 1997), p. 7.

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As summarised by Thelen, a forerunner in the field of historical institutionalism, "*rather than conceiving of institutions as 'holding together' a particular pattern of politics, historical institutionalists are more likely to reverse the causal arrows and argue that institutions emerge from and are sustained by features of the broader political and social context. In this approach to institutions, path dependency involves elements of both continuity and (structured) change; institutions are conceived in relational terms and institutional arrangements cannot be understood in isolation from the political and social setting in which they are embedded."* [152] [153]

Rejecting a functionalist view of institutions, historical institutionalists see institutions as enduring legacies of political struggles. How these legacies are actually maintained is the subject of 'policy feedback' literature.[154] One set of feedback mechanisms portrayed by North can be described as the incentive structure or coordination effects.[155] What this means is that once a set of institutions is in place, actors adapt their strategies in ways that reflect but also reinforce the 'logic' of the system. A second feedback mechanism has to do with the distributional effects of institutions. Here the idea is that institutions are not neutral coordinating mechanisms but in fact reflect, even reproduce and magnify, particular patterns of power distribution in politics. This body of work emphasizes that political arrangements and policy feedbacks actively facilitate the organisation and empowerment of certain groups while actively dis-articulating and marginalizing others. The distributional biases in particular

[152] Thelen, K. 'Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics', *Annual Review of Political Science.* 1999 / 2, p. 384.
[153] An example of historical institutionalism applied as an approach can be found in Schmidt, Manfred G. *Political Institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003).
[154] Pierson, P. 'When Effect Becomes Cause: Policy Feedback and Political Change' *World Politics*, Vol.45 / 4 (July 1993).
[155] See North, D. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance.* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990).

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institutions or policies 'feed back' so that over time some avenues of policy become increasingly blocked, if not entirely cut off.[156]

A core contribution of Thelen is that the key to understanding institutional evolution and change lies in specifying more precisely the reproduction and feedback mechanisms on which particular institutions rest. Understanding when and how this happens therefore, requires a 'genuinely historical' analysis in the sense that it should track the unfolding of processes, individually and in relation to one another, over time.[157] Functionalist perspectives fail in that they skirt the issue of the origins of institutions and the important matter of the material and ideological coalitions on which institutions are founded. Borrowing from the tools of rational choice to sort out the logic of the situation and the response of actors could help in conceiving and analysing the consequences of policy 'collisions', the unexpected openings that allow for institutions to evolve in ways that the original designers did not anticipate. However, the core must rest upon a process-oriented analysis which will provide insights into how institutions were constructed and consequently, how they might come apart.[158] Many of the insights from the feedback literature provides tools for exploring the following questions: 'we need to know exactly who is invested in particular institutional arrangements, exactly how that investment is sustained over time, and perhaps how those who are not invested in the institutions are kept out.'[159]

[156] Thelen, K. 'Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics', *Annual Review of Political Science.* 1999 / 2, p. 394.
[157] See Skocpol, T. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy* in the United States. (Belknap, Cambridge, MA, 1992) as an example of such an approach.
[158] Thelen, K. Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics', *Annual Review of Political Science.* 1999 / 2, p. 400.
[159] Ibid, p. 391.

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In epistemological terms, the 'historical' turn in political science meant that an attempt was made to integrate temporal processes into the analysis and to apply the insight that the impact of institutions is often heavily mediated by features of the overarching political or historical context. Whereas rational choice theorists tended to regard institutions purely in terms of their coordinating functions, the historical institutionalist approaches institutions as a legacy of concrete historical processes. As a result, historical institutionalists are likely to be interested in origins and the phenomenon of 'unintended consequences'. Perspectives that conceive of change as the breakdown of one equilibrium and its replacement with another do not capture this dimension of social and political life, where institutions persist as enduring legacies of political struggles. Older classics like Moore (1966) and Gerschenkron (1962) emphasized sequencing and timing in the formation and evolution of institutional arrangements and political coalitions. However, what was missing was the conceptual means through which to demonstrate how outcomes of 'critical junctures' translated into lasting legacies, or in other words the interaction effects among different processes as they unfolded over time and mechanisms for the reproduction of such legacies were neglected.[160] This is seen to be a central contribution of the historical institutionalist genre: the attention it gave to sequencing and the aim of identifying the mechanism that linked two variables in a proposed correlation, as a way of strengthening causal analysis.[161]

The empirical testing of such contentions requires careful, theoretically grounded historical analysis of how political resources and constraints alter the context for future decision-making. While this draws upon Max Weber's notions of leadership and charisma as propellers of social change and institution building, as an approach, historical institutionalism

[160] Collier,R.B. & Collier,D. *Shaping the Political Arena* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991).
[161] Rueschemeyer & Mahoney, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003), p. 6.

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allows for a broader interpretation of both structure and the agent. Taking into account the implications of time horizons, the scope of unintended consequences and the effects of path dependency historical institutionalism builds upon the insights of methodological individualism made by Max Weber, combining them with more recent claims from rational choice and game theory.

Searching for a way through which to bridge the gulf between the methodological procedures of historians and those of political scientists and economists, the *analytic narrative* emerged in the late 1990s as a new method of analysis.[162] By using an analytic narrative two goals are intended, the application of a theoretical framework to empirical data and the identification of causal mechanisms that are generalisable. A challenge of dealing with 'historical' material is precisely the charge that nothing is generalisable, for each historical event is unique, contingent upon a set of circumstances. How then might it be possible to draw generalisations across time and space? In the words of one its most famous advocates and practitioners, Margaret Levi, the analytic narrative 'represents one attempt to improve explanations of unique events and outcomes, unravel particular puzzles, and at the same time construct the basis for a social science capable of addressing significant questions of the past and present.'[163]

Analytic narratives involve choosing a puzzle or problem, then building a model to explicate the logic of the explanation and to elucidate the key decision points and possibilities, and finally evaluating the model through comparative studies and testable

[162] For some of the most well-known exponents see, *Analytic Narratives*, Robert H. Bates, Avner Gref, Maragaret Levi. Jean-Laurent Rosenthal and Barry R. Weingast (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998).
[163] M.Levi, 'An analytic narrative approach to puzzles and problems' in Shapiro, Smith, Masoud (eds), *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 205.

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generalisation that the model generates.[164] The analytic narrative favours parsimonious models, ones where the number of exogenous factors are sufficiently few that it is possible to know how changes in their values can affect the institutional equilibrium. All narratives have to have an anchor, or set of anchors that are explicit in order to make it easier for criticism and challenges to be made than in more configurative accounts. This is a different strategy than the establishment of a general model from which is derived testable hypotheses, explored with appropriate cases[165]. The assumptions of rational choice and the logic of game theory generate hypotheses, but the models are refined in interplay with the detailed elements of the narrative. While the claim to generalisability of findings is clearer when hypotheses are deduced from general theory, the explanations of specific instances may be less compelling and realistic. This has long been a critique of the rational choice program in comparative and historical politics and one that the analytic narrative approach attempts to address.[166]

A common critique of both rational choice and analytic narrative approaches has been the danger of conducting curve-fitting exercises, where the model is modified to simply 'fit' the data. In its defence, the analytic narrative, with its emphasis on facts and historical sequence, compels the researcher to search for novel facts that the old model did not recognise or capture. This then makes the refinement of the model, part of a progressive research programme in the Lakatosian sense.[167]

The construction of analytic narratives is an iterative process, resembling Alexander George's method of *process tracing* which attempted to identify intervening causal process

[164] Ibid. p. 208.
[165] See for example Merkel, Wolfgang 'Embedded and Defective Democracies' and Croissant, Aurel 'From transition to defective democracy: mapping Asian democratization' both in *Democratization*, Volume 11 / 5 (December 2004).
[166] Ibid. pp. 213 - 214.
[167] Ibid. pp..218.

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between an independent and dependent variable.[168] The aim is to convert 'descriptive historical' accounts into 'analytic ones' that are couched in 'theoretically relevant' language, the central contention being that by tracing processes that may have led to an outcome, it helps narrow the list of possible causes.[169] Initially the theory is formed from the data, selected because it offers a good fit. Rendered explicit, the theory then becomes vulnerable, subjected to both logical appraisal and empirical testing. Its logic moreover renders it a source of new insights, leading to the gathering of new data and placing the theory at further risk. The iteration stops once the testable implications run out, providing a finished product that reveals not only a conclusion but also the process of coming to that particular interpretation.[170] This approach will be discussed in more details in the section on methodology in this chapter when the framework for analysis of this thesis is laid out.

Attention to the narrative ensures that, to the extent possible, the author can reconstruct the points in the strategic interactions when contingency and uncertainty have an impact on the outcome. The model suggests and the narrative explicates why certain paths were chosen, others purposely foregone, and others not considered at all. However, path dependence requires more than identifying the constraints that derive from past actions or the incentives that are built into new institutions. The sequences in which events occur are causally important; events in the distant past can initiate particular chains of causation that have effects in the present. Path dependence, as understood through the prism of the paths not taken, means more than 'history matters'. Certain institutions in certain contexts become self-enforcing in the sense that the alternatives continue to appear unattractive. Beliefs of the

[168] George, Alexander A. 'Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison' in Paul Gordon Lauren, (ed.) *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory and Policy*, (Free Press, New York, 1979).
[169] George & Bennet, *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. (MIT Press, Cambridge Mass, 2004).
[170] Bates, Levi, Rosenthal, Weingast, Greif, *Analytic Narratives* (Princeton University Press, 1998), pp14 – 19.

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players then matter as much as history. While beliefs are certainly affected by historical experience, they are also affected by what actors know of the other players within the current context.[171] Path dependence in analytic narratives also implies that once certain institutional arrangements are in place – and with them certain distributions of power and authority – it becomes more difficult to reverse or change course.

Where this approach differs from other meta-narrative, qualitative analyses such as modernisation theorists, world system theorists and others, is two-fold. Firstly, the analytic narrative seeks to locate and explore *mechanisms* that shape the interplay between strategic actors and that thereby generate outcomes. Secondly, the above mentioned theories tended to be heavily biased towards a structural view of reality, focusing on the origins and impact of alignments, cleavages, structures, institutions whilst the analytic narrative provides an insight into the choices and decisions made at the level of the individual within a given context.[172]

2.5. Path Dependency and Policy Studies.

While not providing a framework or theory, *path dependency* offers an alternative way of looking at stability and change. As an explanation of a particular phenomenon it competes with the argument that institutions and policies exist simply because of the political circumstances pertaining at the time. What is highlighted by adopting this approach is that choices formed when an institution is being set up or a policy is being formulated, have a constraining effect into the future. This, it is posited occurs because institutions and policies

[171] M.Levi 'An analytic narrative approach to puzzles and problems' in *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 214 - 215.
[172] Bates, Levi, Rosenthal, Weingast, Greif, *Analytic Narratives* (Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 12.

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have a tendency towards inertia: once particular paths have been forged it requires a significant effort to divert to another course.

It is noteworthy that path dependency has been used within political science almost exclusively within a broad institutionalist framework. Neo-institutionalism and more recently, *historical* institutionalism both accepted the idea that individuals act under the constraints of institutional arrangements, the present structure and functioning of which can only be understood in terms of a historical perspective. Hence the application of the insights mentioned have tended to be applied at the macro, constitutional level, focusing on formal institutions and not at the policy level which is what the thesis concerns itself with. Pierson however, does make the point that, 'major public policies also constitute important rules of the game, influencing the allocation of economic and political resources, modifying the costs and benefits associated with alternative political strategies, and consequently altering ensuing political development'.[173]

To apply the concept of path dependency to the policy-level, the term policy has to be specified and operationalised. As Adrian Kay points out in his paper on the the use of path dependency in policy studies, a 'policy system' can be sub-divided into policy instruments and policy programme.[174] While the former may change, this may not necessarily mean the introduction of a new policy per se. The insight that path dependency provides is that policy decisions accumulate over time which can restrict options for future policy-makers. Hence, the fact that today the discussion surrounding a uniform civil code remains highly contentious is not simply because a Hindu Nationalist party is instrumentalising the issue, as is often

[173] Pierson, P. 'When Effect becomes Cause: Policy Feedback and Political Change', *World Politics*, 1993? 45, p. 596.
[174] Kay, A. 'A Critique of the Use of Path Dependency in Policy Studies', *Public Administration*, 2005, Vol. 83 / 3, p. 557.

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proclaimed. Instead a study of the policy's origins reveals the controversies and polarisation that surrounded the issue already in the 1950s and which, thanks to particular choices and decisions under Nehru's leadership, came to be 'locked in'.

2.6. Designing a model: vision and strategy in policy-making.

Since the thesis does not claim to be unearthing new primary material but rather to be asking new questions of the available documentation, the theoretical framework takes on particular importance. By raising new questions, it is proposed that fresh insights will be generated about Nehru and his political legacy. Current interpretations and explanations for Nehru's behaviour lack an explicit analytical structure which makes comparative research, both in terms of other leaders as well as assessing the varying degrees of success within Nehru's own legacy, difficult. Furthermore, a detailed study of policies in the 1950s has yet to be done. For example, the literature has skirted the question of why Nehru pushed for and signed an agreement like Panchasheela that was based on little concrete material gains for India, or why as contentious an issue as the Hindu Code was aggressively promoted just before the first elections, only to be abandoned and then reintroduced piecemeal as legislation? On the economy, there is scope for investigating how the balance was struck between ideological demands for socialist-style planning and the practical needs of allowing and enabling a mixed economy to evolve.

The thesis borrows from rational choice in terms of examining the context of decisions as well as the decisions themselves in an attempt to examine the costs and benefits of policy making as perceived by the actor. This draws upon Subrata Mitra's application of 'a

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game on the rules of the game' to the analysis of governance.[175] While acknowledging the cognitive limitations of an individual, the aim is to focus on the norms and institutions that constrain behaviour. However, it is necessary to emphasise that it is not being argued that an understanding of context is sufficient. Rather, the intention is to demonstrate that an adequate explanatory theory must begin with individuals whose choices, even within a given set of rules, affect the choices of others and, which often have unintended consequences. The new institutionalist approach is concerned both with how human actions combine to create institutions and how existing institutions structure individual and aggregate choices.

By reading documents, labouring through archives, interviews and surveying secondary literature, the aim is to understand the central actors' preferences, their perceptions, their evaluation of alternatives, the information they possessed, the expectations they formed, the strategies adopted and the constraints that limited their actions. The pieces are put together, using the technique of *process tracing* (more on this below) in order to construct an analytic narrative that accounts for the particular outcome of interest: the breakdown of order, the maintenance of peace, the decision to fight or collude for example. Extracting the processes that produce the outcomes of interest, it is proposed, will capture the essence of the narrative.[176] To elucidate the research design, a summary of the main components is provided: the puzzle, a model of policymaking and core hypothesis. Closing this chapter is a discussion of the comparative case study method, the types of source material used in the thesis and the challenges of studying a historical figure.

[175] Mitra, Subrata K. *The Puzzle of India's Governance*. (Routledge, London, 2006), pp. 9 – 11.
[176] Ibid., p. 11 – 12.

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2.6.1. The Puzzle: designing stable institutions in times of change.

All politicians must act strategically in order to consolidate power and to convert preferences into policy outcomes. The case of Nehru stands out as an example of leadership during the crucial phase of transition politics, when a country moves from colonial to post-colonial status, from occupation to independence, from one ideological extreme to another. It is argued that at 'critical junctures' such as these leaders are faced with a greater than normal challenge of having to balance demands for change and the need for continuity and stability. As a result, both vision and strategic constraints take on additional importance in determining the substance of and tactics behind policymaking. Whilst in the long-run the goal is to create institutional arrangements that guarantee the perpetuity of certain values and interests, the first step requires a consolidation of power so that choices, even if they be unpopular, can be carried through. In the case of Nehru as chapter four will demonstrate the structure of opportunities and constraints was determined by the terms of discourse, a carry-over from the pre-independence, freedom struggle days and the newly installed institutions of a parliamentary democracy. Furthermore Nehru's own preferences and vision did not necessarily match that of the majority, nor was his position of power guaranteed in the early years just after independence. The fact that a number of important policy decisions were implemented within the first decade of independence suggest a policy arena that was relatively open, a fact that Nehru could use to his advantage.

The question that emerges is why, despite the favourable conditions, Nehru's record in terms of producing a legacy of institutionalised policies was such a mixed one? Here the concept of institutionalisation is borrowed from Douglas North who sees institutions as 'humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction...made up of formal constraints

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(rules, laws, constitutions), informal constraints (norms of behaviour, conventions, and self-imposed codes of conduct), and their enforcement characteristics'. [177]For, if one examines closely the policies with which Nehru was personally involved in the framing of, it is noteworthy that neither the Hindu Code nor Panchasheela, both heralded as showpiece policies, evolved into entrenched practices that determined the incentive structure for India's subsequent social reforms or foreign policy. This is important given that in the realm of social reform, the Hindu Code was *the* big achievement during the years under Nehru's leadership.

A purview of legislation during Nehru's administration reveals the following as the most important social legislation of which four were part of the Hindu Code.

1. Special Marriage Act, 1954
2. The Wakf Act, 1954
3. Hindu Law of Marriage and Divorce Act, 1955 (Hindu Code)
4. The Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955
5. Hindu Succession Act, 1956 (Hindu Code)
6. Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 (Hindu Code)
7. Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956 (Hindu Code)

With regards to foreign policy Panchasheela stands out as a unique document, setting out the guidelines for independent India's foreign policy, and hence can be regarded as an important policy for Nehru. Nevertheless as chapter eight will demonstrate, Panchasheela was more or less abandoned as a doctrine of foreign policy under subsequent prime ministers. On the economic front the record of policymaking is very different given the number of colonial provisions that had been put in place to essentially harness British India's economy

[177] North, D. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 3.

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for Britain's needs rather than stimulate economic growth for the benefit of the local population. Nehru's imprint stands out with regards the Planning Commission given his pre-independence engagement and role as Chairman of the Commission after independence. His impact on this policy arena was noteworthy and calls for a closer examination in terms of his underlying vision, strategic decisions and impact on the immediate structure of opportunities.

To a large extent the hopes of a newly independent nation had been invested in the country's Constitution, which in its exhaustive length and scope promised equality and welfare for all (guaranteed as Fundamental Rights) as well as enshrining a list of 'Directive Principles' which the Government had a duty to apply when making laws. The Constituent Assembly debates attest to the long and thorough procedure through which the various articles of the Constitution took their shape. It is interesting to note that Nehru was not one of the most vocal participants during this process and the position he adopted on issues during these discussions is noted in the following chapters. Nevertheless, the three examples chosen here are closely associated with him given that he not only pushed for them in public debates but also vouched for them within Congress discussions and in election campaigns. However, as has been mentioned above and in chapter one the legacy, in terms of institutionalised practices and norms, that has been left behind varies greatly. Hence, the general puzzle addressed in this thesis is, under what conditions do policies generate a process of sustainable, resilient institutionalisation?

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2.6.2. The Hypothesis: vision and strategy as inputs.

The thesis concerns itself primarily with the beliefs, choices and actions of Jawaharlal Nehru. Whilst not trying to make a case for 'the great men make history' school of thought, Nehru is seen to be a pivotal[178] figure shaping the political development of India during the period of the late 1940s and into the 1950s. This, it is argued was both because of circumstances and the particular individual that Nehru was. Being the right man at the right place Nehru was catapulted initially into the limelight more by the efforts and fame of others like his own father, Motilal Nehru and later, Mahatma Gandhi and gradually, through his own efforts to cast himself as the acceptable fallback option, neither as radically leftist as his contemporary, Subhas Chandra Bose, nor as conservatively right-leaning as, his senior comrade, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (two figures examined more closely in chapter four)[179]. Both contingency and conscious calculation was clearly at play and Nehru emerges as an apt case where the individual actor is constrained both by his own worldview as well as the institutional context. While delving deeply into the inner world of Nehru (the subject matter of chapter three), the man is not seen as independent of his times. Thus, Nehru also provides an entry point into the political environment of the late 1940s and early 1950s (subject matter of chapter four), a prism through which the changes as well as the continuity of the period, is refracted.

At 'critical junctures' in time, vision and strategy are especially important in the shaping of politics. Key decision-makers are in a position to shift the substantive content of discourse through the power of their vision and, via procedural machinations to ensure the

[178] By using the word "pivotal" reference is being made to the Shepley-Shubik power index which sought to measure the ex ante likelihood that an individual will be *pivotal* in creating a winning coalition.
[179] An attempt will be made in this chapter to apply the concept of a power index to measure the comparative power of Bose, Patel and Nehru.

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precedence of a particular vision. The contention made here is that both are necessary for policies to take root. Vision and strategy together determine the staying power of a particular policy preference through the mix of *value* and *instrumental* rationality, the congealed preferences which the policy comes to represent. Again going back to Weber, the distinction he drew between '*instrumental'* and '*value'* rationality is constructive. Rationality in its more traditional sense implied a consequential logic where social action is 'determined by expectations as to the behaviour of objects in the environment and of other human beings; these expectations are used as conditions or means for the attainment of the actor's own rationally pursued and calculated ends.'[180] Weber's 'value' rationality drew attention to outcomes that cannot simply be explained in utilitarian terms, when action is 'determined by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behaviour, independently of its prospects or success.'[181] Hence, for example the reason people generally refrain from stealing is not simply because of sanctions in place but also because it is generally perceived as something bad. Stealing, as the example illustrates, might in fact have positive social benefits in the form of enabling poor people to buy goods that would usually be beyond their means and hence act as a form of unintended redistribution that might work more effectively than fiscal policies! Furthermore the existence of stealing provides jobs to locksmiths, insurance companies and lawyers. Hence, a consequential point of view cannot automatically demonstrate that stealing is bad. A non-consequential explanation on the other hand would refer to notions of equality, justice and fairness, values and norms that are considered important in their own right.

Vision and strategy, as the core concepts, in this thesis, were chosen as a means through which to explore the combined impulses of value and instrumental rationality for

[180] Weber, Max *Economy and Society*. (California University Press, Berkeley), p. 24.
[181] Ibid., p. 24 – 25.

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together they determine individual behaviour and, in their different mixes, can have significantly different implications for policy implementation and policy reform. The actor who is driven by his vision and is not strategic in his actions fails to establish a foothold in the policy arena and runs the risk of falling by the wayside. This is what happened to Subhas Chandra Bose, a contemporary of Nehru with strong alternative views on core issues such as the economy and foreign policy but who refused to make the political compromises necessary to secure his position within the Congress party. This comparison is examined in chapter four. The actor who is all strategy without possessing a strongly articulated vision on the other hand, is more likely to gamble with and exploit issues for political gain.

Nehru, as a result, is the focus of the thesis not only in terms of the vision that he bequeathed to Indian politics, but also the strategy that he employed to establish himself centre stage which in turn had implications for policy formulation and in the longer-run, the growth and development of institutional arrangements. In other words, the choices that Nehru made with regards policy are explained both in terms of the ideas that shaped his preferences as well as the political manoeuvring he engaged in to maintain and consolidate his position within the party as well as the position of the party in the political arena at large. Such a two-pronged analysis argues that institutions are created not solely through strategic interaction[182] nor are reducible to individual preferences and idiosyncrasies.

Drawing upon Douglas North, Nehru is portrayed as an individual entrepreneur, an agent of change who responded to the perceived structure of opportunities, and the changes in relative prices or preferences. Thus, it is interesting to examine the Nehru of the 1930s

[182] See Shepsle, K. A "Studying Political Institutions: Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach" in Farr, Dryzek & Leonard, *Political Science in History*. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995) for a discussion of this point.

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compared with the man of the 1940s and 1950s which tracks his transition from the sidelines of the Congress party to assuming the mantle of party leadership, to becoming ‘Chacha Nehru’ or ‘Uncle Nehru’ to the whole nation. In the process Nehru eventually overshadowed other ‘grand’ figures of the independence struggle like Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari, J.P.Narayan who had illustrious careers as freedom fighters and in many ways who outshone Nehru as intellectual thinkers.

The policies that Nehru ultimately opted for resulted in a particular selection of values and norms over others which had both short and long-implications for India’s politics. If, one accepts as North does that institutions provide a mechanism for incremental change, then institutions take on a critical role in terms of determining the opportunities for new bargains and compromises. Newly empowered players have to believe that the benefits of change will override the costs entailed which would have to be borne by them and if institutions are framed in such a way as to make certain options highly costly, the likelihood for change reduces dramatically.

What the thesis is primarily concerned with is the variation in Nehru’s choice of strategy when it came to translating his preferences into policy. This raises the methodological and epistemological question of how to extract a reliable set of preferences. Some have promoted the idea of revealed preferences, using behaviour and action to identify “true” interests although this is still susceptible to the effects of misjudgement, passivity, inattention. To reconstruct Nehru’s preferences, the thesis examines the body of writings which Nehru compiled during his long prison years. Two of these books, An Autobiography and Glimpses of World History were not initially meant for publication, the first being a reflection upon his prison sentence and as ‘a definite task, so necessary in the long solitudes

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of gaol life'[183] while the second was written as a series of letters to his daughter, Indira. As a result the thesis takes these texts as a source of 'revealed' preferences since Nehru had the time to reflect and consider his position on important issues of the day. The evidence that is collected through a text analysis is used together with a content analysis of his speeches as president of the Congress party to determine whether there is any inordinate variation in the opinions expressed or positions taken. Subsequent chapters reconstruct the different stages in the policy-making process to explore whether Nehru's actions and the content of the policies deviated substantially from his inferred preferences. Whilst preferences and ideas certainly change over time, it is argued that on the three subjects of economic development, religion and foreign policy, Nehru held very strong views which he constantly and consistently reiterated over time. Hence, any marked deviations in action or policy content can be read as strategic behaviour which emerged in response to the institutional and political constraints and opportunities of the time.

The thesis therefore implements three core explanatory variables. *Nehru's vision* (the articulation of his preferences and priorities) which is given central importance as an independent variable because, it is argued, a particular vision predisposes the actor to perceive his environment in a certain way. The model examines the interaction with a second independent variable, the *Structure of Opportunities* (the constraints of context, effects of path dependency and the parameters of discourse), which although in part constructed by the actor's perception, is also an exogenous factor in its own right. Finally, through the effects of an intervening variable, the *Choice of Strategy*, (defined in terms of tactics such as the timing of decisions, bargaining on substantive content and the kind of arguments used to justify or debunk alternatives) a particular policy outcome is produced. It is furthermore posited that, a

[183] Nehru, J. *An Autobiography*, (London, J. Capec, 1936), p. xi.

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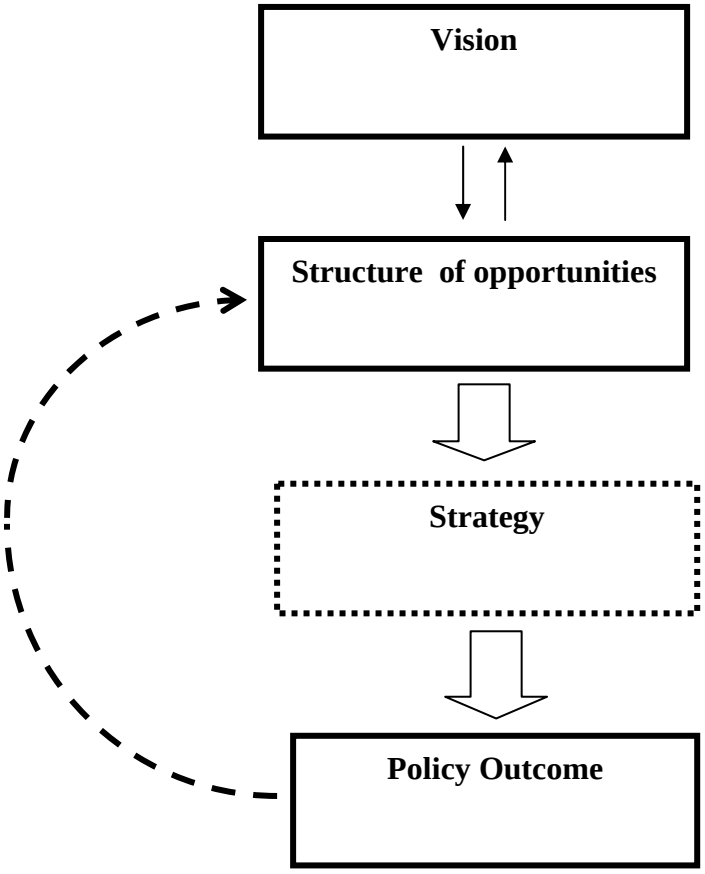
policy outcome can be deigned ‘successful’ if, at least in the short run, it favourably alters the structure of opportunities, i.e. in the actor’s favour.

This can be depicted as following with the ⋯⋯ line depicting the effect of an intervening variable and the – – – line indicating a feedback loop:

Figure 1: model of policy-making.



While Nehru’s vision is closely studied and chapter three explores his thinking process as revealed through his writings, the argument is made that this only explains the general tendency of his preferences but not the tactical manoeuvring needed to transform values into policy. This is where the thesis takes issue with most interpretations of Nehru

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which portray him as driven by strongly held ideals. Any shortcomings or policy failures are hence 'explained' with arguments that imply he was simply too good for the system. For instance, that he was too trusting in the Chinese who betrayed him or, so strongly secular that his expectations of the Hindu majority community were too high. Whilst these views may certainly be valid, the thesis posits that a much better picture can be gained by perceiving Nehru as a potent mixture of idealism and hardnosed political realism.

Furthermore, by simply relying on his vision and ideals one cannot explain the long-run shelf life of his legacy given the *sub-optimal* results that his policies generated. Sub-optimal because in the case of both social reform and foreign policy, Nehru's policies gave birth to institutional practices that did not generate an efficient equilibrium in the long-run. 'Efficiency' is taken here to mean political stability combined with economic growth and regional peace. Instead, by focusing on the strategy behind his policies one gains an understanding of where and when compromises were made, even on the ideals and substance and, how the policy arena was shaped in order to create an advantageous playing field. Having examined the choices made in the 1950s, the three policy arenas are tackled in chapters five, six and seven and the concluding chapter eight, provides an overview of how the three evolved to carry forth the congealed preferences of Nehru.

As a result the chapters on the Planning Commission, Panchasheela and the Hindu Code Bills each give particular emphasis to the *structure of opportunities* as this varies across the three cases. To demonstrate the importance of path dependency, a pre-history to each of the policy fields is presented in terms of a genealogy of the institutions, laws and debates installed or initiated under the British as well as generated from within the freedom movement.

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2.6.3. The *Explanandum*: policy outcomes and institutional resilience.

Defined by Douglas North as, 'the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction (institutions) consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights)'[184], institutions act as the interface between society and the state and play a crucial role in determining the room to manoeuvre for elites. In addition to their importance in creating order and reducing uncertainty in exchange, institutions are 'carriers of history' which implies that historical precedent can influence the shaping of a whole institutional cluster. Using this insight, the thesis proposes to explore the way in which resources and constraints either directly inherited from the British or heavily influenced by the colonial experience were translated into new institutional arrangements under Nehru's leadership.

The thesis employs a combination of the analytic narrative and process-tracing which has been defined as a method of within-case analysis to evaluate causal processes.[185] According to the leading proponents of this method, Alexander George and Timothy McKeown, this method does not solely rely on the comparison of variations across variables in each case but also 'investigate(s) and explain(s) the decision process by which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes."[186] Thus, the aim of the researcher is to provide a theoretically explicit narrative that carefully traces and compares the sequence of events. In the words of Bates and his co-authors, their book, which employed the analytic

[184] North, Douglas "Institutions", *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol.5/1 (Winter, 1991), p. 97.
[185] For one of the earliest explicit definitions of process-tracing in political science see George, Alexander & McKeown, T. "Case Studies and Theories of Organisational Decision-Making". *Advances in Information Processing in Organisations*, 2 (1985), pp. 21 – 58.
[186] George, Alexander & McKeown, T. "Case Studies and Theories of Organisational Decision-Making". *Advances in Information Processing in Organisations*, 2 (1985), p. 35.

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narrative, "seek(s) to understand the actors' preferences, their perceptions, their evaluation of alternatives, the information they possess, the expectations they form, the strategies they adopt and the constraints that limit their action."[187] The thesis follows in their footsteps and examines, in each of the examples, (a) the preferences and perceptions of Nehru, (b) the alternatives available at the time in terms of policy choices, (c) the individuals close to Nehru who most probably reinforced his particular view and expectations and, (d) tactical behaviour in the decision-making process which reflects the constraints of the context. Process-tracing therefore opens up the black box of decision-making to examine whether differences and similarities across the three selected examples have a causal or spurious impact on the outcomes. Unlike most analyses of Indian politics which tend to focus on collective actors such as political parties and caste associations and their functions within the political system, the use of process tracing as a methodological tool, allows for hypotheses to be generated about pathways and sequential processes. Given that Nehru is the case under study, the methodological innovation of process tracing, comparing three examples of policy-making, casts a new perspective on the rationality of Nehru's policy choices.

Since the method of process tracing differs from a historical narrative in that it uses an analytical explanation couched in theoretical variables it requires an explicit research design. What is crucial here is that at each step in the account, a specific theoretical 'law' should be tested which acts as a statement of regularity between a set of events. Thus the thesis begins with three sets of hypotheses to be tested. While the first two are derived from the theoretical literature of rational choice and new institutionalism as discussed above, the third hypothesis is drawn from the writings about Jawaharlal Nehru as depicted in chapter one.

[187] Bates et al, *Analytic Narratives* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 11.

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The three hypotheses correspond to three initial puzzles:

1. Is rationality context-bound and highly subjective?
2. Why do sub-optimal institutions persist?
3. Are Nehru's policies better understood as the product of visionary thinking or hard-nosed tactical bargaining?

The hypotheses that follow:

1. Individuals choose the best action according to stable preference functions and the constraints facing them.
2. Institutions can be explained by the *function* they serve.
3. 'Nehru's political career was rooted in a vision of a new India, which in turn gave him the intellectual and personal energy and commitment necessary for such a long and demanding public life. Appreciating the origins and power of this vision is essential for an understanding of the man.'[188] (the implication being that vision alone enables the observer to understand Nehru, the political actor and his policy choices).

To 'test' each of these statements, the thesis applies the model proposed above which claimed that the *structure of opportunities* together with the actor's *vision* explains the *choice of strategy* and ultimately the policy outcome. It is also posited that the policy outcome and subsequent *institutional arrangement* is subject to the forces of path dependency, unintended consequences and positive feedback depending on the strategy employed by the original authors of a particular policy.

[188] Brown, Judith *Nehru. A Political Life*. (New Delhi, Oxford University Press 2003), p. 5.

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In order to carry out this study, the policy-making process in each of the three cases is traced as thoroughly as possible. To begin with Nehru is the focus of the next chapter which examines his worldview and situates him within the discourse at the time on socialism, secularism and foreign policy. This is done both by analysing his own writing as well as contextualising him with regards to his contemporaries. Formative events in his life prior to becoming Prime Minister are highlighted and a cognitive map attempts to assess the assumptions and logic behind his policy preferences.

The subsequent chapter examines the constraints of the Congress party and after independence, additionally, the role of parliament and the cabinet in the decision-making process. Equipped with this background information about Nehru's internal and external worlds, the thesis proceeds to study the separate cases of the Planning Commission, the Hindu Code Bills and the Panchasheela Agreement. Each case study follows a similar structure: (1) a pre-history of the policy, (2) a portrayal of Nehru's position on the subject at the time of independence and in relation to others, (3) the key individuals close to Nehru and influential in the policy field, (4) a step-by-step account of how the policy was articulated in the public domain, in parliamentary debates and, (5) an analysis of the policy in its final shape at the time of implementation.

A discussion of these findings compared across the three examples is presented in the final chapter. Ultimately, the thesis aims at examining the input of both vision *and* strategy that was contained within the three cases of foreign policy, economic policy and social reform initiatives implemented by Jawaharlal Nehru as prime minister. By doing such a comparative study the goal is to delve as deeply as possible (to the extent that the material allows) into the process of policy-making, for it is proposed that this has implications for

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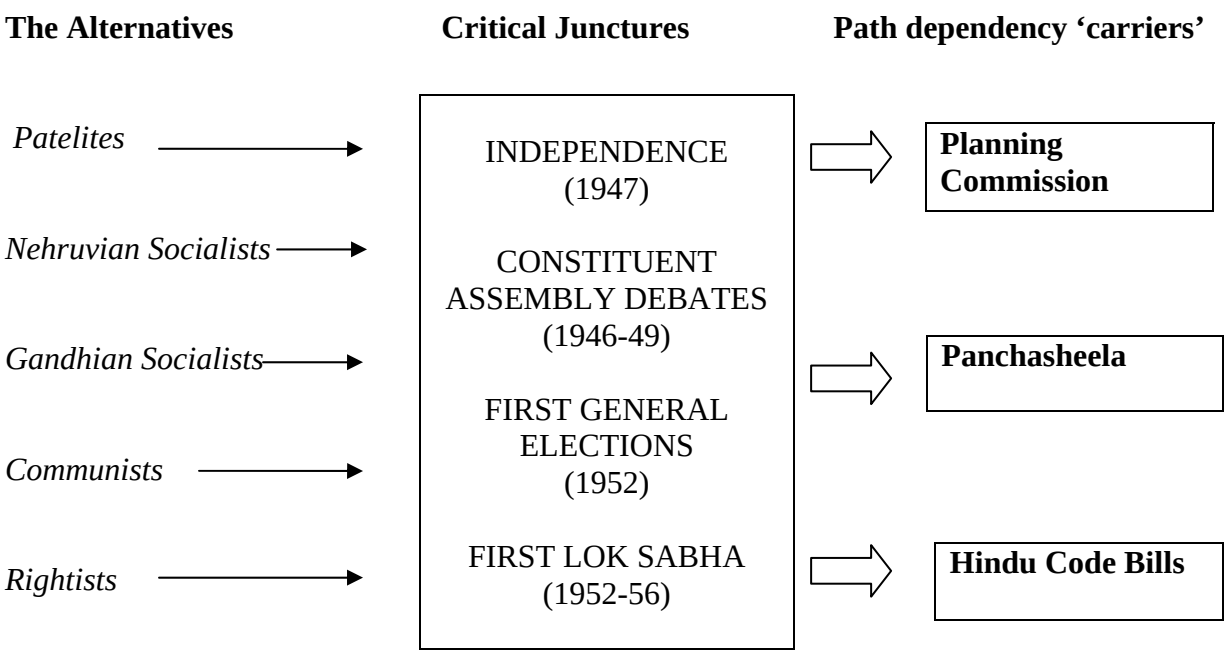
understanding the origins of India's post-independence institutions and the long-run scope for institutional stability and change.

Figure 2: Path dependency of policy choices.



As depicted above in figure 1.2, the thesis will propose that a 'critical juncture' was in place during the early 1950s thanks to a number of contingent events listed in the middle box. These were, most obviously, independence declared on 15th August, 1947 which marked an end to the formal 'transfer of power from the British to Indian leaders, the Constituent Assembly which met from 1946 to November 1949 to determine the country's new constitution and the first general elections of 1952 which led to the formation of the first fully elected legislative of the Republic of India. Each of these events are considered important contributors to a critical juncture in that they re-wrote the 'rules of the game' and introduced new players in the form of political parties, voters and parliamentary committees among

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others. To explore the space of issue positions at the time, the thesis makes use of five general categories: Rightists, Patelites, Nehruvian Socialists, Gandhian Socialists and Communists, broadly corresponding to the Right-Left spectrum of Western European politics. These were manifest during the Constituent Assembly Debates as well as in the manifestos of the political parties campaigning in the first elections and in the proceedings of the first parliament. The three policy outcomes with which this thesis is concerned are the formation of the Planning Commission, the signing of the Panchasheela Agreement and the passing of the Hindu Code Bills. Each it is argued, contained a particular package of value and instrumental rationality and, each were to demonstrate path dependency effects. Hence, while the Planning Commission was born out of a consensual policy process, Panchasheela was essentially cast as a non-issue in the debates of the time whilst the Hindu Code was a hotly debated and divisive subject. The substantive chapters five, six and seven examine these characteristics in detail and their implications are observed in chapter eight.

2.6.4. The Unit of Analysis: three cases of policy-making.

Since this thesis engages in a very small-N comparative analysis, the danger of a selection bias[189] is particularly high. By choosing my three examples there is the risk of focusing on three interesting cases but in the process, restricting the analysis artificially to extreme cases and producing biased estimates of causal effects. However, the cases were chosen for the variation on the dependent variable, i.e. the policy outcome. Panchasheela, for all its high rhetoric left behind an *under-institutionalised* arena in the field of foreign policy-

[189] A distortion in the results due to the way in which data has been collected. Lijphart advances this view. See Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method", The American Political Science Review, Vol. 65/3, Sep 1971, pp. 682 - 93.

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making, the Planning Commission in contrast sustained a resilient institutional arrangement even in the face of liberalisation and the Hindu Code bills, while an important institutional achievement, failed to evolve further, representing a *partially-institutionalised* policy arena. In addition, the cases were selected so as to correspond with the three policy domains that are considered to be pillars of Nehru's legacy. Furthermore, they represented issues that were supposedly close to his heart: socialism, modernisation and internationalism. The decision to use in-depth studies of particular policies is also what distinguishes this research from the existing material on Nehru which tends to employ a linear narrative. Such linearity tends to overlook the overlapping, multi-layered nature of politics where issues are inter-linked and bargaining takes place at various levels at the same time.[190] By looking at three examples of policy-making in parallel the hope is to identify both regularities in the behaviour that characterises the policy-choice process as well as variations in terms of the outcome.

2.6.5. The Sources for data collection.

A variety of primary sources have been consulted in the process of research, including newspaper archives, private papers of key individuals, official documents and parliamentary debates. The thesis has heavily relied upon the constituent assembly debates, from December 9th, 1946 to August 15th, 1947, the subsequent 'Interim Parliament' debates and, following elections in 1952, the *Lok Sabha* debates of the 1950s, Nehru's own writings, published letters between him and his contemporaries, the publications of his contemporaries[191] and his

[190] See for instance the literature on the 'Two level game' in international relations literature, for example, Putnam, R.D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", *International Organization* 42 (Summer 1988), pp. 427 – 460.

[191] These include, among others, published works by Vallabhbhai Patel (freedom fighter and India's first Home Minister), Rajendra Prasad (freedom fighter and India's first President), Subhas Chandra Bose (freedom

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Letters to Chief Ministers. Archival research as opposed to fieldwork in the form of interviews was chosen as the preferred research strategy. Whilst there are political personalities or observers alive today who experienced the Nehru administration first-hand, it was decided that a more than fifty-year time lag made memory and recollections too unreliable as a source. However, the process-tracing method relies heavily on the in-depth knowledge of the analyst and hence a conscious effort was made to read newspapers of the time and critical literature that was shaping the minds of many then, for instance as was the case with Harold J. Laski's work.[192] This was another reason to keep the number of case studies low, to limit them to three in order to conduct a deep investigation into the complex conglomeration of historical, contextual and political features that constitute a particular policy field.

2.7. Conclusion: the methodological challenges of working on a historical figure.

While the analytic narrative and process tracing provide useful tools through which to combine a historical narrative with an analytical framework there are a number of pitfalls which need to be considered. First of all, process tracing requires an enormous amount of data and the thesis is constrained by the information available and time limitations. A lot of primary data remains under control of the Nehru-Gandhi family and access is granted on a limited and preferential basis. Nevertheless the thesis is confident that from a close examination of the parliamentary debates, which so far have been under-utilised by scholars

fighter), J.B.Kripalani (freedom fighter and politician in independent India), Minoo Masani (freedom fighter and politician in independent India).

[192] Laski, H. *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1943).

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in the field, together with the other primary material mentioned above, useful inferences can be drawn based on the new kind of questions that the thesis is raising.

A major quandary encountered during research was the question of where the narrative should start and when it should end. Since path dependency is seen to be a crucial element of the analysis the notion of a 'starting point' becomes highly contentious. If, as has been argued, only contingent events can trigger path-dependent processes[193], then perhaps the partition of 1947 leading to the formation of independent India and Pakistan can be used as the 'critical juncture' in the narrative. Nevertheless the thesis considers the colonial pre-history in each of the policy fields to be of analytical significance since much of Nehru's thinking represents continuity with colonial practices and preferences. Similarly, in terms of deciding where to end the analysis, because of time and space constraints, the chapters focus on the period prior to the selection of a particular policy choice and end with the policy decision itself, hence, 1950 when the Planning Commission was formed and 1951/52 when the First Five Year Plan was launched, 1954 when the Panchasheela Agreement was signed and, the Hindu Code comprising of the *Hindu Marriages and Divorce Act,* 1955, *the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act,* 1956, *the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act*, 1956 and *the Hindu Succession Act,* 1956.

An additional problem lies with the fact that process tracing is no guarantee of causality and the findings of the case studies may turn out to be contingent generalisations. Nevertheless, it is posited that in the process of conducting the analysis, inferences that are drawn can be useful in supporting existing theories and may even contain potential policy-

[193] See Mahoney, J. "Path dependency in historical sociology", *Theory and Society*, 29 /4 (2000), pp. 507-548.

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relevant findings. Hence, the conclusion of the thesis reflects upon possible implications for current policy problems in the three fields under study.

The main problem it is argued with existing historical accounts about Nehru and his politics is that the literature does not provide adequate explanations for Nehru's choices and the outcomes of these choices. Simply stating that his vision was the driving factor behind his action does not provide a complete explanation for it is necessary to examine the extent to which this vision was articulated and the process by which it was translated into action. By identifying a complex sequence of events the thesis aims at an interpretation that incorporates the cognitive, contextual and time-based constraints under which Nehru operated.

In the final concluding chapter a section will discuss how the thesis makes a contribution to the area of studies on leaders and leadership in political science. Whilst this has been a relatively neglected field, it is argued that individual leaders provide a valuable prism through which to analyse the ideas and concepts prevalent at a particular time as well as, the institutional 'rules' of the game. A central claim made here is that both are important in understanding and explaining policy outcomes. Furthermore, it is proposed that a vision (see above for a definition) enables the leader to think in terms of strategy that aims at both long-run structural changes as well as tactical manoeuvres for immediate political gains, both of which are necessary for his or her 'staying power'. As a result, by examining the structural constraints together with the particular compromises and bargains struck, it is possible to unpackage the complex mix of tactical manoeuvring and long-run strategic outlook that a policy outcome entails.

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Sheldon Wolin, who in 1960 wrote a book on political philosophy titled 'Politics and Vision', attached great importance to the notion of vision as an ordering device through which reality is given shape. Tracing continuity and innovation in western political thought, Wolin examined how major categories in political theory are a 'continuously evolving grammar and vocabulary to facilitate communication and to orient the understanding'.[194] The analysis of Nehru, who was by no means a political philosopher, nevertheless requires an understanding of the categories and semantics that he was applying in order to provide a more complete explanation of his actions. The same would be necessary for a political analysis of the policy choices of other leaders such as Mao Tse-Tung, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Muhammad Ali Jinnah or President Sukarno of Indonesia.

[194] Wolin, Sheldon S. *Politics and Vision*. (Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1960), p. 27.

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Chapter Three

Nehru, his world view.

3.1. Introduction

3.2. Nehru's Formative Phase.

3.3. Nehru's Intellectual Context

3.4. The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites

3.4.1. Nehru on Religion and Secularism**.**

3.4.2. Nehru on Economic Development and Socialism

3.4.3. Nehru on Foreign policy and Internationalism

3.5. Conclusion: operationalising a cognitive map**.**

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a systematic analysis of Nehru's worldview. This will be done in three different steps. At first, a chronological account of his rise to power within the Congress party will be presented. This section provides the basic biographical details that framed his political career prior to independence. The narrative stops in 1940 when Nehru began his longest period of prison sentences which lasted into 1945. Between the end of World War Two and India's independence, the transfer of power from British to Indian hands was worked out and, will be examined more closely in the following chapter. The purpose that this biographical interlude serves is to observe Nehru's gradual ascendance within the party, to highlight his relationship with Mahatma Gandhi and, to take note of the

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events and issues that may have shaped him. Due to constraints of space this has been deliberately kept short.

The chapter then shifts its focus to the core ideas that were to form the pillars of his political programme as Prime Minister. The context is still the pre-independence years because this is when Nehru did most of his writing during frequent prison terms. The quality of this material is generally considered to be high, partly because as a 'Class A' political prisoner[195], Nehru had privileges which usually included the opportunity to order books and newspapers. Hence, the books written in the 1930s and early 40s are not only deeply self-reflective, wide-ranging and extensively referenced, but are also well-informed about current politics and, as a result, serve as a useful window into Nehru's concerns and thought processes. This requires a second step, which is to contextualise Nehru intellectually within the currents of political and economic thinking that were popular at the turn of the century in Britain and Europe. Corresponding with the three policy choices that have been selected as the thesis' focus (the Hindu Code Bills, the Planning Commission and the Panchasheela Agreement), are three broader conceptual fields. These are the extent of state involvement in developing the economy, the role of the state in reforming society and the nature of the state in international politics. In this section therefore, the Fabian and utilitarian discourse, popular at the time in Britain, will be presented in order to understand the origins of some of Nehru's beliefs and priorities.

Finally, the chapter seeks to explore the inner consistency of Nehru's thought process. To do this a selection of central statements by Nehru on the three policy themes is presented

[195]Unlike those who were considered terrorists and sent to the far-off penal colony of the Andaman Islands where the rate of death in custody was notoriously high, 'Class A' prisoners were allowed regular access to the outside world.

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and analysed by means of a 'cognitive map'.[196] By creating a 'cognitive map', the aim is to gain an insight into the inner logic and premises underpinning Nehru's thinking and the conclusions that he came to. Since *vision* is one of the central explanatory variables proposed by the thesis, an attempt is made to conduct a comparative analysis of Nehru's thinking across the three issue areas mentioned above. It is argued that such an exercise helps to understand the preferences of the actor, his internal logic and, as a result will add to an explanation of the choices made in his/her decision-making.

A conclusion summarises Nehru's position on the role, nature and goals of the state which acts as a basis for the contrast drawn in the next, chapter four between him and his contemporaries, two of which will be studied in order to locate him within a spectrum of political thinking at the time. Subhas Chandra Bose and Rajendra Prasad were both important figures in the freedom struggle and each, in their own way, represented and set the bases for an alternative to Nehru's vision of modern Indian politics. While the literature on Subhas Chandra Bose is quite substantial and parallels and contrasts are often drawn between the two contemporaries, Bose and Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, despite being the first President of the Republic, tends to have been a neglected figure in modern India's politics. This could, in part, be due to the fact that Bose's home state, West Bengal has made a concerted effort to encourage scholarship about the leader[197] and to preserve his 'hero-status' whilst Prasad's state of Bihar has invested little in the creation or preservation of an icon. Nevertheless Prasad's letters of correspondence and publications are available which, along with his

[196]For a discussion of 'Cognitive Maps' see section below. The definition used here is that 'A cognitive map is a representation of the causal beliefs or assertions of a specific individual', Hart, J. 'Cognitive Maps of Three Latin American Policy Makers', *World Politics*, Vol. 30 / 1 (Oct, 1977), p. 116.

[197] An excellent example of this is the *Netaji Research Bureau* in Calcutta, West Bengal in India:
See http://www.netaji.org

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statements in the constituent assembly debates, generate the contrast and comparison with Nehru.

3.2. Nehru's Formative Phase.

Biographical material on Nehru is bountiful and the thesis does not claim to make any new discoveries about the *sources* of his ideas and preferences and the external influences on him.[198] Rather, the aim here is to present a method by which to compare his thinking in the three issue areas of secularism, socialism and internationalism. The prime purpose therefore that this brief biographical interlude serves, is to contextualise Nehru in terms of key happenings in India and major developments in European politics. The table below collates the main events that are referred to in this section, juxtaposing crucial developments in the Indian political scene with important steps in Nehru's career.

Table 1: Context and Chronology

Phase	National Events	Jawaharlal's Political Career
19th century origins	**1885** Founding of the **INC**	**1889** Nov. 14 **Birth** of Jawaharlal Nehru (JN)
In Search of a Creed	**1905-11** **Swadeshi** movement in Bengal **1906** Founding of **Muslim League** **1907** **Surat split** of Congress Indian Councils, Act: Morley-Minto reforms **1910** **All India Hindu Sabha** founded	**1905-07** JN Schooling at **Harrow** **1907 -10** JN Education at **Cambridge**

[198] For an official biography see S. Gopal's magisterial three volumes, *Jawaharlal Nehru. A Biography*. (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1984).

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	1911 British India **capital** shifts to **Delhi** **1914-18** Indian soldiers sent to fight in **WW1** **1915** Annie Besant begins **Home Rule campaign**	**1910-12** JN at **Gray's Inn**, London **1912** JN **returns to India**
The arrival of Gandhi	**1915** Return of Gandhi from S. Africa **1916** **Home Rule Leagues** set up by Besant & Tilak **1916** **'Lucknow Pact'** between Congress and Muslim League	**1916** JN **joins** Besant's **Home Rule** **1916** JN first **meets Gandhi**
India at Crossroads	**1919** **Government of India Act** passed. **'Dyarchy'** and limited devolution of powers to the provinces. **1919** **Rowlatt Act** extended wartime emergency provisions into peacetime **1919** Gandhi's first ***Satyagraha*** campaign against Rowlatt **1919** **Jallianwala Bagh massacre** **1920** Non-cooperation **Khilafat movement** begins.	**1919** JN **works with Gandhi** in Punjab after Jallianwalla Bagh **1920** Nehru's **first rural campaigns**
India Demands Independence	**1922** **'Chauri Chaura'** incident leads Gandhi to call off the non-cooperation movement. **1922** **Gandhi arrested** **1924-26** **'Council Entry'** by *Swarajists* led by Motilal Nehru (MN) **1926-27** **Workers and Peasants Parties** founded in Bengal, Punjab, Bombay, UP **1928** **Simon Commission** & **Nehru Report** **1929** **Purna Swaraj resolution**: 'Complete Independence' demanded by Congress. **1930** **Salt March** (March/ April) inaugurates *Civil Disobedience* **1930-1** **First Round Table Conference** in London on new constitution for India. Congress boycotts it. **1931** **Gandhi call off Civil Disobedience** (March) – Gandhi-Irwin pact **1931** **Karachi Resolutions** adopted at Congress	**1921** **Motilal Nehru** (MN) **& JN arrested** **1923-26** JN chairman of **Allahabad Municipal Board** **1926-27** JN **in Europe** / Attends Conference for Oppressed Peoples in Belgium **1927** MN & JN visit **USSR** **1929** JN elected **Congress President** and **President** of **AITUC** **1930 - 1931** Jan JN in and out of **jail** **1931** **MN dies** **1931** Dec **- 1933** Aug JN in and out of **jail**

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	1931-32 Second Round Table Conference: Gandhi attends as sole Congress representative	
Combating the British	**1932-34** Revival of **Civil Disobedience** **1934** **Congress Socialist Party** founded **1935** **Government of India Act** **1936** Elections to Provincial Assemblies **1937-39** **'Mass Contact'** programme **1937-39** Ministry period for Congress in provinces **1938** **Subhas Bose** elected Congress president, appoints **National Planning Committee** **1939** **'Tripuri crisis'** over re-election of Bose, Bose resigns & forms **Forward Bloc** **1939** **Resignation of Congress ministries** in protest against Viceroy declaration of war on India's behalf **1940 'Individual Satyagraha'** begun by Gandhi **1940** Muslim League **'Lahore Resolution'**	**1934** Feb - **1935** Sep JN in **jail** **1935** JN in Europe **1935** Death of Kamala Nehru **1936** JN elected **Congress President** **1937-39** JN involved in **Mass Contact** **1938** JN appointed **chairman** of **National Planning Committee** **1939** JN visits China **1940** Oct - **1945** June JN in and out of **jail**.
A battle of wills at home	**1942** **Cripps Mission** in India **1942** **Quit India Movement** **1943** Gandhi's 21-day fast **1943-45** **Bengal Famine** **1944** Gandhi released from prison **1944** Abortive **Gandhi-Jinnah talks** **1945** Release of Congress Working Committee members including Nehru **1945** **Simla Conference** called by Viceroy Wavell **1945-6** **Elections**: Muslim League major gains	**1944** JN **writes *Discovery of India*** in jail **1945-46** JN **defends Indian National Army prisoners** in INA Trials
The last mile	**1946** **Royal Indian Navy mutiny** **1946** Apr - June **Cabinet Mission** **1946** Aug **'Direct Action Day'** launched by Muslim League **1946** Aug 16-18 **Great Calcutta Killings** begins sectarian violence across the country **1947** Aug 15 **Independence Day** **1947** Infiltration of 'tribals' into **Kashmir**	**1946** Sep Provisional Government sworn in with **JN as PM**
	1948 Jan 30 **Assassination of Gandhi** **1948** Sep **'Police action'** in **Hyderabad** state.	**1949** Oct JN visits **USA**

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The period prior to independence is referred to here as Jawaharlal Nehru's 'formative phase'. This was a time of great political activity in India and using Nehru as the reference point, this section seeks to highlight some of the major events and developments leading to independence in 1947.

Born in 1889 into a wealthy, Brahmin family settled in Allahabad, in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh but who originally hailed from Kashmir, Jawaharlal had a childhood that was exposed to both, great religiosity on his mother, Swarup Rani's part and the highly westernised habits and views of his father, Motilal Nehru.[199] From 1901 to 1904 Jawaharlal was educated at home by a European tutor, then sent, at the age of sixteen, to Harrow and from there to Trinity College, Cambridge where he graduated with a Lower Second in the Natural Sciences Tripos in 1910. In accordance with the wishes of his father, Motilal Nehru, a highly successful barrister and political figure in his own right, Jawaharlal went on to read law at Gray's Inn, London, the same place where before him Mohendas Karamchand Gandhi and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, among others, had studied. It is during this time that Jawaharlal encountered the movement of *Fabian Socialism*[200] (See the following section on Nehru's Intellectual Context for more details), popular at the time in Britain, through the lectures of Harold Laski at the London School of Economics and began to develop a more extreme political outlook, distancing himself from his father's preference for gradual constitutional reform. This reflected the growing schism within Indian politics back home. In 1907 the Indian National Congress (INC)[201] had split at the Surat session, divided between the

[199] For example in 1899 Motilal made his first trip to England and was officially excommunicated by his caste members when he refused to perform a purification ceremony upon returning.

[200] A British socialist movement, with its origins in the nineteenth century, whose central idea was that Socialism could be advanced through gradual reform and not through revolution. At the core of the society were Sidney and Beatrice Webb, authors of various studies on industrial Britain and the Soviet Union. See for example, Webb, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Soviet Communism: a new civilization?*(Scribner, new York, 1936).

[201]Founded in 1885 by Allan Octavian Hume, the INC became the leading organisation in the freedom struggle

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Moderates, which included Motilal Nehru who favoured British-induced reforms and the *Extremists* who called for direct action like boycotts. Importantly, the Extremists at this time were largely those advocating a religious nationalism, as in the case of the All-India Hindu Sabha[202] founded in 1911, an alternative which, as shall emerge, did not appeal to Jawaharlal. Not having attained much academic success, Jawaharlal returned to India in August 1912 and began to work for his father's law practice in Ahmedabad. Politics at this point in time in India was relatively quiet with leaders of the *Swadeshi* movement[203] in jail. The outbreak of World War One in 1914 stirred the political environment and prompted anti-British movements to take shape. The Defence of India Act, passed in March 1915 empowered the government to suppress civil liberties and imprison anyone deemed to be a threat to British interests. Rallying together, the Moderates and Extremists reunited in 1915 and initiated the Home Rule Movement which in addition to demanding self-government argued, that the British war effort was to be supported not opposed in exchange for concessions later on. The Muslim League[204] also accepted the argument and in December 1916 the INC and Muslim League reached an agreement, known as the 'Lucknow Pact' in which the Congress accepted separate electorates[205] and the League accepted under-representation for Muslims in Muslim-majority areas in return for over-representation in Muslim-minority areas.

Responding to the events around him, Jawaharlal's views began to take a clearer shape, in particular as he engaged directly in politics for example through Annie Besant's Home Rule League.[206] Meeting Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi for the first time in the

[202] This, in 1915, became the Hindu Mahasabha.
[203] Swadeshi translates as 'Self-Sufficiency'. Mahatma Gandhi had developed a strategy of boycotting British products and reviving local production methods and products.
[204]Founded in 1907 to safeguard the rights of Muslims, the Muslim League eventually became the political group agitating for a separate Pakistan.
[205] Separate electorates here referred to provisions which would create electorates consisting only of Muslims.
[206] Launched in 1916 by an English reformer, Annie Besant's Home Rule League was modelled on the Irish experience, and was one of the first successful attempts to create an all-India mass protest movement. The INC

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winter of 1916 at the Lucknow Congress of the INC, Jawaharlal was unable to relate to his style and rhetoric of politics which he found to be an unfamiliar blend of grass-root activism, asceticism, religion and philosophy. However, in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act was passed, extending wartime repressive legislation into peacetime, it was Gandhi who galvanised the Indian response through his first nation-wide campaign in an all-India *Satyagraha*[207] to resist the Act through non-violent civil disobedience. This entailed courting arrest, returning of titles bestowed by the Raj, boycotts of schools and colleges, withdrawal of lawyers from courts, campaigns against the use of foreign cloth. Marking the beginning of Jawaharlal's direct involvement in active politics, another major event of 1919, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, soon came to eclipse the Rowlatt Act. On April 13, opening fire on a peaceful gathering of people, General Dyer's battalion killed hundreds of people, official estimates put the number of dead at 379 though it was widely agreed that the actual figure was much higher. The Congress began to organise relief work in the Punjab and set up its own enquiry committee in which Jawaharlal was involved. During the investigation Jawaharlal was in close contact with Gandhi and from then on seems to have found in him, his mentor.

The momentum generated in Punjab and the unity and solidarity which infused the Amritsar Congress session was carried forward into the *Non-Cooperation Khilafat Movement* of the 1920s. Following the defeat of Turkey in World War One and the harsh Treaty of Sèvres signed on May 14, 1920, Indian Muslims were growing increasingly agitated over the fate of the *Khalifa*[208] in Turkey. Recognising the potency of the issue, Gandhi announced a non-cooperation movement which was accepted by the Khilafat Committee and the Congress party in 1920. Motilal Nehru also changed from his earlier position which had disapproved of

till this point was largely an elite organisation without the grass-root political networks which Gandhi was later to create.

[207] Coined by Gandhi, Satyagraha can be translated as 'truth force'.

[208] Also, Caliphate refers to the 'head of State' amongst Sunni Muslims.

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anti-constitutional means, to support Gandhi. Boycotting November 1920 elections, the movement represented a dramatic new phase in Indian politics for it witnessed the emergence of a popular mass movement entailing radical pan-Islamic and Hindu believers, united by the method of non-violent, civil disobedience. The success of the movement carried over into the empty streets and *hartals*[209] which greeted the Prince of Wales, future King Edward VIII on his visit to India in 1921.

This period seems to have marked a turning point in Nehru's political career for he also began to gain first-hand knowledge about working conditions in factories and the state of the peasantry. In 1920 Jawaharlal participated in the Congress' Allahabad district conference and was elected vice-president of the district committee, his first official position. This was also the year when Jawaharlal 'discovered' the peasants in his first rural, campaigns within the *Kisan* (farmers) movement. Carrying Gandhi's message of non-violence to the *kisans* in the Uttar Pradesh countryside, it was precisely these principles of *satyagraha*, entailing self-restraint which was to clash with Jawaharlal's own inclinations towards socialism and its ideals of radical and revolutionary change. However, for both the Nehrus, this seems to have been a period of transition and greater involvement in active resistance against the government and on December 6, 1921 both father and son were arrested and sentenced to six months in jail each.

Three months into their jail sentence, at what seemed to be the peak of the Non-Cooperation movement, Gandhi called off the movement in response to an outbreak of violence at a place called Chauri Chaura in UP. Shocked by Gandhi's unexpected move, Jawaharlal felt along with others as though the cause of the movement, as well as his own

[209] An indigenous term for strike action.

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sacrifices, had been betrayed. His *Autobiography* noted, 'The sudden suspension of our movement after the Chauri Chaura incident was resented.....What troubled us even more were the reasons given for this suspension and the consequences that seemed to flow from them. Chauri Chaura may have been and was a deplorable occurrence and wholly opposed to the spirit of the non-violent movement; but were a remote village and a mob of excited peasants in an out-of-the-way place going to put an end, for some time at least, to our national struggle for freedom?'[210] For Gandhi however, Chauri Chaura was a sign, a warning from God that 'that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which alone can justify mass disobedience' and for which he had to atone.[211] Both the language and methods that Gandhi employed stand in stark contrast to Nehru's reasoning.

Briefly released, Jawaharlal was re-arrested on a new charge and commenced his first long spell of imprisonment that lasted till January 31, 1923. Upon his release he agreed to become chairman of the Allahabad (UP) Municipal Board where Jawaharlal gained experience in administrative work. Disillusioned with the abrupt ending of Non-Cooperation and Gandhi having withdrawn himself to reflect and reconsider the methods of the struggle, Jawaharlal sought other sources of inspiration. The aftermath of the Russian Revolution was felt in India during the mid and late 1920s with the growth of left-wing parties, Workers' and Peasants' parties, an increase in trade unionism, worker's agitations and strikes. In this context, Jawaharlal's intellectual moorings began to lean more towards the left.

In March 1926 Jawaharlal, his wife and daughter left for Europe to treat his wife's condition of tuberculosis. During this stay, Jawaharlal travelled to major European cities and

[210] Nehru, *An Autobiography* (The Bodeley Head, London; 1953), p. 82.
[211] Gandhi, M.K. 'The Crime of Chauri Chaura' in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India), Vol. XXII, pp. 415 – 21 and 'Divine Warning', pp. 423 – 27.

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met with prominent intellectuals. For example at the International Conference against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism at Brussels, which he attended as the representative of the INC, Jawaharlal encountered Romain Rolland, Albert Einstein, Sun Yat Sen's widow, Song Qingling. Playing a large part in the proceedings, in the drafting of resolutions and making of public statements, Jawaharlal was beginning to carve out for himself an international persona.

Upon returning to India, Nehru was to participate in a new phase of Indian politics beginning with the arrival of the Simon Commission which was to review India's progress towards higher political development and to determine its fitness for self-government. Adding insult to injury, the Commission was composed of all-white members. A boycott was to be organised and an All-Parties Conference coordinated cooperation between the INC, the Muslim League and other groups. A committee was formed to draw up a rival constitutional framework to that of the Simon Commission, and was chaired by Motilal Nehru who, continued to favour constitutional reform and gradual progression from dominion status to eventual independence. In contrast, Jawaharlal had piloted a resolution at the Madras session of Congress in December 1927 declaring 'independence with full control over the defence forces of the country, the financial and economic policy and the relations with foreign countries'[212] to be the goal of the Indian people. The resolution was criticised by contemporaries such as Rajendra Prasad who called it 'silly', and feared it would turn Congress into 'the laughing stock of the world'.[213] The resolution was also criticised by Gandhi who wrote to Nehru to warm him 'You are going too fast....Most of the resolutions

[212] Subjects Committee of Madras Congress, December 25, 1927, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3 (1972), p.3.
[213] Ibid, p.4.

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you framed and got carried could have been delayed.'[214] Although the resolution was ultimately passed, a public confrontation was avoided.

The anti-Simon Commission black flag demonstrations brought large numbers of people out onto the streets and pursued the Commission across the country. The Nehru Report which emerged from Motilal's Committee recommended the abolition of separate electorates but, treading a fine balance between Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha demands, the Nehru Report ultimately failed to produce a consensus on the issue of reserved seats. Carrying out an admirable attempt to foster Hindu-Muslim unity, the Nehru Report was an example of how the constitutional approach to self-government could fall hostage to internecine disputes and bickering over details, a result that, in Jawaharlal's view, only served to perpetuate British rule. As a last resort, the Nehru Report accepted dominion status on the basis that it would be granted within a year, failing which the Congress would demand complete independence. One year later, with no clear moves from the government, the Congress passed the *Purna Swaraj* (Complete Independence) Resolution in Lahore on December 31, 1929. Elected as Congress president, this represented a high point in Jawaharlal's pre-independence career. On January 26, 1930, the flag of the INC was unfurled and hoisted as the national flag and 'Independence Day' was marked across India (a date that is still commemorated today).

In his presidential speech, Jawaharlal recognised that he had not been the favoured choice amongst Congress members. Jawaharlal Nehru was still a relatively unknown figure in politics and the masses, workers and peasants, along with the provincial Congress' elites had gathered to cast their votes for either Mahatma Gandhi or Vallabhbhai Patel. Correspondence

[214] Gandhi to Jawaharlal, Sabarmati, January 4, 1928, *Old Letters*, p. 58.

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between Gandhi and Jawaharlal's father, Motilal Nehru are revelatory. In mid- 1929 Motilal wrote to Gandhi, "The revolt of the youth has become an accomplished fact.....It would be sheer flattery to say that you have today the same influence as you had on the youth of the country some years ago.....All this would indicate that the need of the hour is the head of Gandhi and the voice of Jawahar.....There are strong reasons for either you or Jawahar to wear the 'crown'....".[215] Nevertheless, once in the position, Jawaharlal attempted to set out his manifesto with a distinct socialist orientation and having been recently elected president of the All-India Trades Union Congress (AITUC), he advocated greater cooperation between the AITUC and the INC.[216]

In February 1930 Gandhi declared the British salt tax to be the target of the next civil disobedience movement. The government had a monopoly on the manufacture of salt and the tax on salt was paid by Indians. Gandhi planned to launch the campaign with a 240-mile 'Salt March' on March 12 beginning at his Ashram near Ahmedabad and ending at Dandi on the west coast where Gandhi would break the law by collecting salt. With this act, civil disobedience across the country was ignited and, took the form of either illegal manufacturing of salt or the boycotting and burning of foreign textiles.

In response, a British crackdown put many into jail including Jawaharlal who was incarcerated from April 14 to October 11 and again from, October 19 to January 1931. The year 1931, must stand as a significant turning point in Jawaharlal's life for in February the death of his father, Motilal left him grief stricken. Furthermore, on March 5, 1931 a truce was signed by Gandhi and the Viceroy, Lord Irwin in which Gandhi had agreed to give up boycotts as a political weapon. Nehru's reaction to this was 'tremendous shock', or as he put

[215] Wolpert, S. *Nehru .A Tryst with Destiny* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996), p. 97.
[216] For more on Nehru's presidential speeches see the subsequent chapter 4.

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it in his *Autobiography*, 'The Civil Disobedience Movement was ended....Was it for this that our people had behaved so gallantly for a year? Were all our brave words and deeds to end in this.....This is the way the world ends, Not with a bang but with a whimper'.[217] Despite the disappointment and sense of betrayal at Gandhi's unilateral decision to end the campaign, Jawaharlal was unwilling to publicly break with Gandhi. Recognising his vulnerability - the Working Committee (central decision-making body of the Congress party[218]) had proposed a unanimous choice of Sardar Patel as Congress president - Nehru was aware of how little support he commanded within the party and hence, chose not to risk further alienation by openly opposing Gandhi. Asked by Gandhi to move the resolution ratifying the Gandhi-Irwin Pact[219], Nehru ultimately gave in to his survival instincts and as he recalls, "Almost at the last moment, a few minutes before the resolution was taken in the open Congress, I decided to sponsor it. In my speech I tried to lay before the great gathering quite frankly what my feelings were and why I had wholeheartedly accepted that resolution and pleaded with them to accept it."[220] Perhaps as a gesture in return, Gandhi condoned the resolution on fundamental rights which Jawaharlal had drafted and introduced, committing the Congress to a comprehensive program of social and economic reforms.

After a short period of release, Jawaharlal was back in jail on December 26, 1931 to begin his longest term that lasted until August 30, 1933. As has been noted by many of his biographers this was a time that Jawaharlal put well to use, reading and writing widely. A book of essays and letters to his daughter, Indira Gandhi written during this time was

[217] Nehru, *An Autobiography* (The Bodeley Head, London; 1953), pp. 257 – 9.
[218] See page 154 for an organigram of the Congress party.
[219] Signed on March 5, 1931 the Pact included a commitment by Gandhi to discontinue civil disobedience and on part of the Government, the withdrawal of ordinances issued to curb the activities of the INC, the release of prisoners arrested for participating in the civil disobedience movement, removal of the tax on salt and, the participation of the INC at the Round Table Conferences to negotiate India's move towards Dominion status.
[220] Nehru, *An Autobiography* (The Bodeley Head, London; 1953), p. 266.

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published as *Glimpses of World History* in 1934.[221] To quell the growing vagueness surrounding his thoughts and political inclinations, Jawaharlal published *Whither India* in October 1933 in pamphlet form which sought to answer questions about what was to come after independence and the implementation of socialism into policies. Arrested again in February 1934 for having denounced imperialism and tried for sedition, Jawaharlal was sentenced to two years imprisonment during which he wrote his autobiography (published in 1936 with the same title).

In September 1935 with Kamala Nehru's condition deteriorating, Jawaharlal was granted early release on the condition that he would go with her to Europe and not return to India before his sentence expired in February 1936. In the meantime the Government of India Act of 1935 was finally passed setting out a scheme of provincial autonomy, in which British Indian provinces would be ruled by elected Indian ministries but the governor would retain reserve powers. Separate electorates were maintained and safeguards granted for British business and financial interests. In all of this Jawaharlal's role appears to have been minimal, neither having played a major role in formulating nor in resisting the provisions.

Kamala Nehru died on February 28, 1936 and Jawaharlal returned to India in March 1936 to assume the mantle of Congress President for the second time. By then, rival factions within the INC were clearly emerging. Founded in 1934 as a group within the Congress, the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) called for the formation of a United Front of anti-imperialist forces including the Communist Party of India. One of its most influential spokesmen,

[221] Zachariah's *Nehru* (Routledge, London, 2004, p.70) lists some of the books Nehru read during this first long phase of imprisonment: Shakespeare, a number of books on China, a book on eugenics, Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, Emil Ludwig's historical biographies, Ruskin and Carlyle, Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*, *Kropotkin's The Great French Revolution*, Trotsky's *My Life*, Bernard Saw, Ramakrishna's *Hindu View of Life*, a great deal of history, French and British literature, Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, R.H.Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.

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Jayprakash Narayan advocated a Marxist-Leninist programme. Although Jawaharlal never joined the CSP he was regarded by many of its members as a sympathiser. Furthermore, thanks to Jawaharlal's close relationship with Gandhi he was increasingly perceived as the bridge between two broad trends that were emerging within the Congress. This included, on the one hand the 'modernists' referring to industrialists and socialists, united in their faith in industrialisation and, on the other hand, the 'indigenists'[222], which meant the Gandhians and Hindu sectarians who aspired towards a society based on indigenous traditions. Although Gandhi may have seen Jawaharlal as a unifier, others, such as his contemporary, Subhas Chandra Bose accused Jawaharlal of never having the courage to oppose the Mahatma and of drifting along, trying to please both the Right and the Left.[223]

As President of the 1936 Congress Jawaharlal's statements implied a turn towards socialism[224], alarming businessmen and Congress members on the right of the ideological spectrum and adding to the strains caused by a central dilemma about the nature of Indian nationalism: was the Indian nationalist movement to be defined as a loose, broad, all-inclusive, secular movement but one that essentially lacked an ideological core? Right-wing tendencies within and without the Congress tended to be Hindu, upper-caste property owners, the dominance of whom was likely to alienate the 'Depressed Classes', minorities and particularly Muslims. On the other hand, the Muslim League at the time was also inclined more towards maintaining the *zamindar* (land owner) - based social order, pushing Muslims in favour of radical social change closer to the left wing of the Congress. Within the right wing, prominent businessman, such as G.D.Birla and political figures like Vallabhbhai Patel and Bhulabhai Desai also identified themselves as 'Gandhians'.

[222] Used by Zachariah , B. *Nehru* (Routledge, London, 2004), p. 10.
[223] See, Bose's observation in *Netaji Collected Works*, (Netaji Research Centre, Calcutta, 1981) Volume 2 p. 370.
[224] For more on Jawaharlal's presidential speeches see chapter 4.

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Confronted by the prospect of provincial elections (as a result of the Government of India Act, 1935), the Congress was split between those, especially the leftists, who wanted to boycott the elections, and those, especially business leaders and landlords, who wanted Congress to work with the Constitution. In the end Congress contested the elections held in early 1937 and emerged with massive victories. Contesting 1,161 out of a total of 1,585 seats, the Congress won 716 of them. From April 1937, the Congress was running nine out of eleven provincial governments, six on its own and three in coalitions. A crucial experience in governance and power-sharing, office acceptance also brought the Congress into conflict with itself. With ministries containing few representatives of the Left, the CSP and its affiliated organisations like the *Kisan sabhas* and the trade union movement, found themselves engaged in a struggle against the Congress which was in effect seen to be helping to run an imperialist system.

Till the mid-thirties the philosophy of the Congress-led movement had been to provide an institutional umbrella incorporating all hues of political outlook. The crisis over Subhas Chandra Bose's re-election as Congress president in 1939 brought tensions to the fore allowing Jawaharlal to emerge as a consensus candidate.[225] By this time, Jawaharlal had begun to appear as the one of the few possible unifiers within the Congress movement. In November 1937, an anonymous article appeared in the Calcutta-based *Modern Review*, titled *The Rashtrapati* (President)[226], warned that there was a tendency to see Nehru as a kind of saviour and that the man might be in danger of seeing himself as a latter day Napoleon or Caesar. It turned out that Jawaharlal himself was the author and while the intentions behind publishing such a piece are debated, the point is that he was increasingly in the limelight. From 1937, following the first provincial elections in which the Congress won easily in six of

[225] For more on the 1939 crisis see chapter 4.
[226] See Appendix for a copy of this article.

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the eleven provinces and dominated two more, Jawaharlal took it upon himself to become the 'conscience of the ministries'[227], reprimanding premiers of various provinces on their policies and statements as well as lecturing Congress on the need to keep an eye on the main goal of independence. Afraid of losing the collective momentum as the day-to-day running of provincial administrations distracted Congress members, and observing fractionalisation within Congress, the 'Mass Contact Programme' was launched in 1937 with Jawaharlal Nehru as one of its main leaders. Aimed at bringing Congress into close contact with those who were not yet Congress supporters, *Muslim* mass contact was deemed a priority.

Drawn into 'high' politics more directly, Jawaharlal views on the role of religion in politics and the potential for communal violence took on a harder line. For instance, writing to Stafford Cripps, at the time an upcoming figure in Labour politics to whom he had been introduced to by his friend, Krishna Menon in London[228], Jawaharlal was intent on conveying the influence of the Congress on the Muslims, claiming that "I come into greater touch with the Muslim masses than most of the members of the Muslim League. I know more about their hunger and poverty and misery than those who talk in terms of percentages and seats in the councils and places in the state services."[229] Issuing such an open challenge, released in the form of a statement to the press, Jawaharlal's actions had the effect of spurning the Muslim League to launch a far more successful 'mass contact' campaign of its own as well as setting the leader of the Muslim League, Muhammad Ali Jinnah on a war path. Other examples can be given of occasions when Jawaharlal's publicly advertised principles did not serve the cause of gaining support for the Congress and are an early indication of Jawaharlal's discomfort with, and inability to manage religion as a force in politics. Approaching the

[227] Zachariah, B. *Nehru* (Routledge, London, 2004), p. 90.
[228] For more on the relationship between Nehru and Krishna Menon see chapter four.
[229] Quoted in Wolpert, S. *Nehru. A Tryst with Destiny* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996), p. 223.

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problem of communal politics in highly dichotomous terms, Nehru more often than not depicted the Congress as 'an advanced organisation' pitted against 'a politically reactionary organisation like the League', ruling out the possibility of Congress sharing power with any minorities in the provincial ministries, a move which may have helped to dispel accusation that Congress provincial rule, particularly in the heavily Muslim-populated state of Uttar Pradesh, was discriminatory and repressive against Muslims.

As an escape from the political infighting, Jawaharlal looked to international affairs and foreign travel. In 1937 he visited Burma and Malaya and in June 1938 left for Europe where he experienced the Spanish Civil War, made numerous public appearances in which he spoke on subjects such as the dangers of fascism, imperialist aggression and the world situation.[230] Witnessing the Munich pact of 1938, Jawaharlal Nehru observed, first hand, the growing sense of crisis and approaching war that was building up in Europe. Reflecting the growing tendency of British policy makers to regard Jawaharlal Nehru as a potential partner, in June 1938 he was invited to a weekend discussion on the possible terms for a treaty on the transfer of power with participants such as Sir Stafford Cripps, Harold Laski, Labour politicians as well as Krishna Menon of the Independence for India League.[231]

By December 1939, when the Congress ministries had resigned in protest against Britain's declaration of war on India's behalf without consulting any of the 'representative' bodies of Indians, the Congress party organisational capabilities had been diminished, a right-left fault line had been exposed and communalist politics was on the rise. For most of the Second World War, Nehru was behind bars, jailed from November 1940 to December 1941

[230] See Nehru's letters in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Volume 9, Series One, pp. 1 – 202.

[231] Krishna Menon was to become one of Nehru's closest confidantes and a key figure in decision-making after Nehru became Prime Minister.

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and again, from August 1942 to June 1945. The period between the end of the war and the declaration of independence on August 15th, 1947 will be examined in subsequent chapters when the debates of the Constituent Assembly, formed in 1946 to write the Constitution of India, are referred to.

3.3. Nehru's Intellectual Context

Key developments in the political and intellectual climate of turn-of-the-century Britain were to play a crucial role in shaping the policies of both post-war Britain and independent India. Amongst these, the influence of the Fabian society is an important prism through which to observe the change and continuity in ideas and practices from the age of Victorian utilitarianism to the post-war social democracy and welfare politics of the Labour party. Founded in 1883, the Fabian society attracted a number of intellectuals including among others, George Bernard Shaw, H.G.Wells, Annie Besant, Harold Laski, Beatrice and Sidney Webb. What is interesting is how closely Nehru's thoughts on the state, modernisation and development reflected the twin sources of ideas popular at the time in Britain: utilitarianism and fabianism.

As Governor-General of India in the mid-nineteenth century, Lord Dalhousie upon reviewing his years of administration, is supposed to have described the railways, electric telegraph and uniform postage which he introduced to India as the 'three great engines of social improvement'.[232] Such a reading of legacy reflected the philosophy of utilitarianism, as articulated by Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. In his *History of British India*, Mill had questioned the values of Indian society and proposed reforms along Benthamite ideals.

[232] Quoted in Ghosh, S.C. The Utilitarianism of Dalhousie and the Material Improvement of India', *Modern Asian Studies*, 121/ 1 (1978), p. 97.

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Despite being a Conservative, Dalhousie was therefore advocating that the key to progress in India was the introduction of Western science and knowledge. Crucial to note, is that the utilitarian idea of progress was not only progress brought about through scientific innovation but also reform of the existing social order. Hence, Dalhousie saw it as his duty to tackle the problems of infanticide, female education, the treatment of Hindu widows. Unity of authority, uniformity of management and legal practices were essential principles within this vision of governance. Codification was to emerge as one central instrument to put these principles into practice. References by Dalhousie to 'the good of the community', 'the interests of the public', 'the welfare of mankind' were echoes of the central utilitarian, 'Greatest-happiness precept'.

His farewell address on 5 March 1856 in Calcutta is a good example of this: 'While we have a right to congratulate ourselves on what has already been done, while we may regard with complacency the introduction into the East of those great instruments of public benefit which Science has long since created in the West; while we may rejoice that measures have been already taken for opening new sources of public wealth, for ministering to the convenience of increasing the happiness, and for raising the mental and social condition of the endless millions, whom providence for its own wise ends has committed to our charge; I trust we still shall feel that all we have yet done must be regarded as no more than the first beginning of greater things that are to come.'[233]

Nehru, in some ways represented continuity with this line of thinking. His speeches and writings, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, often claimed the interests of mankind and of society as a whole, to be at stake. Even more striking was Nehru's propensity to

[233] Ibid. p. 108.

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believe in the wisdom and acumen of eminent individuals who could conceptualise and grasp the good of the community and take action from a neutral, benevolent position. His tendency to concentrate power and decision-making in the hands of a few individuals, his persistent monitoring and correspondence with chief ministers throughout his term as prime minister, attest to this.

Fabianism, as a current of political thought emerged in response, or rather in dialogue with the dominant ideas and in reaction to the experiences of industrialisation during the Victorian age. Believing in the possibility of gradual transition and reform, the Fabian Society rejected notions of class struggle and revolutionary change advocated by Marx's followers. Instead, it was argued that evolutionary and constitutional methods, the use of persuasion and permeation would bring about a gradual process of socialisation.[234] Although Fabianism came to be embraced by the post-war Labour government it was never a doctrinal set of principles. The main goal of its adherents was to tackle the great injustices wrought by the capitalist system and to spread the theory of evolutionary socialism. As a result, democracy was to play a central part in the Fabian outlook as it provided the opportunity to bring about change peacefully and gradually.

The position of Fabianism on the State did not reject the utilitarian notions of the 'greatest happiness for the greatest number' and the need for society to be reorganised from above but instead, sought to extend them. Sidney Webb for instance is a good example of how utilitarianism was enhanced through his faith in positivism. Hence, science and experts were to be essential sources of neutral, rational advice. Much of the activity of government then could be left to 'the disinterested professional expert who invents, discovers, inspects,

[234] See for instance Shaw, G.B. *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (Scott, London, 1889).

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audits, costs, tests of measures' so as to pinpoint the facts about social life and its requirements.[235] The knowledge, accumulated by the scientist, would enable them to administer effectively and to indicate priorities on policy matters. Elections, while not to be abolished, were to some extent in Webb's view a symbolic exercise through which popular consent for expertly designed policies could be raised. A belief in the inevitability of society to become ever more differentiated into functional units, held together through cooperation and coordination, meant the broad path of social development was set and, the job of politicians and experts was to develop proposals that would ease the way along this route.

A strong alternative to Webb's view was represented at the time by John Maynard Keynes who advocated fiscal and monetary measures to stimulate the economy essentially by expanding demand and employment. Furthermore, unlike Webb, Keynes focused on the individual as opposed to the common good. Reacting to the depression and unemployment of interwar years, Webb criticised Keynes for advocating short-term solutions within the framework of a capitalist economy when what was needed was a long-term industrial reorganisation within a collectivist economy. Turning therefore to the Soviet Union, which he visited in 1932 and 1934, solutions such as 'planned production for community consumption' appeared to have rationalised the economy for the social good in a way that had abolished 'mass unemployment, together with the devastating alteration of commercial booms and slumps.'[236] In spite of the control exerted by the Communist Part, Webb regarded the Soviet political system as a 'multiform democracy' in which the individual can participate as a citizen, producer, and consumer.[237] Ignoring the ineluctable place of conflict in social life,

[235] Quoted in Bevir, M. 'Sidney Webb: Utilitarianism, Positivism and Social Democracy', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 74 / 2 (June 2002), p. 242.
[236] Webb, Sidney and Webb, Beatrice, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?* (Scribner, New York, 1936), Volume 2, p. 602.
[237] Ibid., Volume 1, p. 427.

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Webb was committed to the ideal of there being an evolutionary movement towards a society where conflict would be largely absent since everyone would be working towards a common good upon which they agreed. Seeing the market as the epitome of immoral and irrational conflict, Webb did not want to recognise the extent to which the Soviet model too, embodied violence and conflict. As will be revealed in the rest of the chapter, Nehru's thoughts and ideas about the role of the market and state and, the nature of societal development carry a striking resemblance.

3.4. The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites

Written in 1976, Robert Axelrod's *Structure of Decision*[238], introduced cognitive mapping as a modelling technique in political science. Defining a cognitive map as a "specific way of representing a person's assertions about some limited domain, such as a policy problem" Axelrod explained that the aim was "to capture the structure of the person's causal assertions and to generate the consequences that follow from this structure."[239] Underlying this statement is the argument that beliefs matter and can make a difference when it comes to policy choices and policy outcomes. Referring to another eminent political scientist whose work on cognitive psychology is widely known, Axelrod quoted Herbert Simon to justify the strategy of inference that he adopts where 'given the properties of the parts and the laws of their interaction, it is not a trivial matter to infer the properties of the whole'.[240] Having established these two elements, only then is it possible, according to Axelrod to make predictions and assessments about the way an individual behaves or reacts

[238] Axelrod, R. *Structure of Decision. The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites.* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976).
[239] Ibid. p. 55.
[240] Ibid. p. 55.

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to changes in his environment. The model, while positing that individuals do operate in accordance with the laws of cognitive maps does not assume unlimited rationality. Rather, bounded rationality is revealed not so much 'as failures in (the decision-maker's) ability to draw correct inferences from the beliefs that he does state, but rather as limitations in the structure of the beliefs he presents as an image of the policy environment."[241] As Axelrod points out it is precisely because of what may be unconscious but, which are essentially *self* imposed, restrictions that serious distortions of the external policy environment are likely to occur. A year later, Jeffrey A. Hart in a critical journal article, applied the notion of 'cognitive maps' to a comparative study of three Latin American policy makers.[242]

Since this thesis is not aiming at an in-depth study of Nehru's belief system, its goals for developing a cognitive map are more modest. The prime concern is to explore whether Nehru's thoughts in the three policy areas of social reform, economic development and foreign policy, were equally well-conceptualised and internally consistent. Hence, the chapter has its own self-imposed limitation, in that it does not seek to develop a mathematical model for Nehru's overall belief system in order to *explain* his subsequent policy choices. This would be only half the explanation according to the model proposed in chapter two for the contextual constraints and exigencies of power politics, it is argued, play a central role in understanding why Nehru acted the way he did. However, a central proposition being made is that in the policy areas where Nehru's vision was more clearly articulated, he was more successful in getting results in terms of designing policies and institutions to put his ideas into action. In order to test this hypothesis it is necessary to conduct a *comparative* analysis of Nehru's cognitive map as applied to the three policy areas specified. As Axelrod himself

[241] Ibid. p. 57.
[242] Hart, J.A. 'Cognitive Maps of Three Latin American Policy Makers' in *World Politics*, October 1977, Vol. 30/1.

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admitted, a cognitive map cannot capture the nuances of individual causal beliefs and must leave out beliefs that are not causal by nature[243], hence the comparisons that are to be drawn in this chapter are based on a process that drastically simplifies reality.

A cognitive map, Axelrod specifies, has only two basic elements: concept and causal beliefs. 'The concepts are treated as variables, and the causal beliefs are treated as relationships between the variables'.[244] To apply this to Nehru's belief system, the thesis refers to various arguments put forward by Jawaharlal Nehru in speeches and books on the three themes of secularism, economic development and foreign policy. An attempt is made to discuss the three areas comparatively and to examine whether there is a variation in the inner consistency and complexity of Nehru's thoughts on the subject. A representative statement is chosen from three different sources each of which were important platforms from where Nehru could launch his position. Hence, in the first case of religion and secularism an ardent speech delivered when he was invited to preside over the Congress' Punjab Provincial Political Conference in 1928, was one of Nehru's early opportunities to make his views on critical issues known to a wider audience. On economic policy, a section from Nehru's Presidential address to Congress in 1936 is examined. This was an important occasion given that provincial elections were just around the corner and Nehru had been advocating a focus on economic issues and socialism. Finally, on foreign policy Nehru's 1934 book, *Glimpses of World History*, a key text on his understanding of international diplomacy and world politics, is used for a representative extract. Although the timing and specific purposes of each source differs, the texts are considered insightful since each carried a particular focus related to the three policy areas of secularism, economic development and foreign policy. Hence, it was

[243] Axelrod, R. *Structure of Decision. The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites.* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976), p. 58.
[244] Ibid. p. 58.

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assumed that they could be used to reflect Nehru's concerns and considerations on the particular theme. While views and interpretations of the world certainly change over time it is posited that actors retain predispositions, especially on issues that have been singled out for attention from an early stage on. In Nehru's case, this chapter demonstrates that the issues of communalism and secularism, economic development and socialism, diplomacy and internationalism were matters of central concern to him.

Having extracted some initial observations based on a simple codification[245], the analysis made at the end of the chapter serves as a prism through which to examine Nehru's choices and decisions that feature in detail in chapters 5, 6 and 7 on the Planning Commission, Panchasheela and the Hindu Code Bills respectively. The following steps are taken: (1) All 'conceptual variables' are pinpointed. These are terms that can take on different values such as 'security' which can be of a greater or smaller amount. Following Axelrod's methodology, cognitive maps frequently contain concepts variables for utility which refers to the unspecified best interests of the actor or what he considers to be in the best interests of the country or community.[246] Other typologies include 'goal' variables which are variables that directly affect the utility variables and 'policy' variables which the individual seems to designate as being susceptible to control or manipulation.[247] (2) Additional properties of the cognitive map concern the nature of the causal *paths*, or the chains of causation. There are basically two types of path: *positive* paths which contain an even number of negative assertions and *negative* paths with an odd number. (3) An important property of the cognitive map is *path balance* or the degree to which parallel paths between pairs of related variables

[245] The Coding Rules that are followed are set out by Margaret Wrightson in Axelrod, R. *Structure of Decision* (Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 291 -332.
[246] Axelrod, R. *Structure of Decision* (Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 59.
[247] Hart, J.A. 'Cognitive Maps of Three Latin American Policy Makers' in *World Politics*, Vol. 30 / 1 (Oct. 1977), p. 119.

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have the same sign. This is held to indicate the *consistency* of the policy choice implied which is defined as 'the setting of a policy variable to a certain value so that all causal effects, direct or indirect, have a positive effect on utility.'[248]

3.4.1. Nehru on Religion and Secularism.

"Communalism, of course has to be fought ruthlessly and suppressed. But I really do not think it is such a power as it is made out to be. It may be a giant today but it has feet of clay. It is the outcome largely of anger and passion and when we regain our tempers it will fade into nothingness. It is a myth with no connection with reality and it cannot endure. It is really the creation of our educated classes in search of office and employment."[249]

The above quote exemplifies Jawaharlal Nehru's thinking on the challenge of accommodating religion within modern politics as will be seen from the following overview of his early writings and speeches. To begin with however, a system of coding is applied in order to assess the causal assertions inherent in the above statement and to extract a cognitive map for this particular theme of the role of religion in society. The first step is to identify *conceptual variables* that the author emphasizes. In this case these are the following:

A = the Suppression of Communalism (goal / utility variable)
B = Anger and Passion / our tempers (policy variable)
C = Myth (goal variable)
D = Educated Classes (policy variable)

The next step is to look for the direct correspondence between variables.

[248] Ibid. p. 120.
[249] Nehru, J. Presidential Address at Punjab Provincial Conference, April 11, 1928, Gopal, S. (ed.) *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Series One, Volume 3, (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1972), pp. 219 – 230. See Appendix for copy of the speech.

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1. More Anger and Passion means it is more difficult to suppress communalism (positive relationship: both increase in value): B $\xrightarrow{+}$ A
2. The creation of an artificial myth hinders the ability to suppress communalism (negative relationship): C $\xrightarrow{-}$ A
3. The Myth is created by the Educated Classes (strategic, rational behaviour, positive relationship): D $\xrightarrow{+}$ C
4. The actions of the educated classes add to the generation of anger and passion (positive relationship): D $\xrightarrow{+}$ B

What are interesting are the following observations:

1. There is no positive utility associated with any of the variables. Communalism is a highly negative phenomenon and all the other variables are either intervening obstacles (anger and passion) or the outcome (a myth) of vested interests (the educated classes).
2. There is no obvious 'policy variable' which would be variables which the individual seems to designate as being susceptible to control or manipulation by his/her government. However, 'Educated Classes' might be used as an indication of an underlying structural problem that needs to be targeted in order to avoid the outcome of Communalism.
3. An important property of cognitive maps is path-balance, or the degree to which parallel paths between pairs of variables have the same sign. The importance of path balance according to the formulators of cognitive mapping, lies in its relationship to the consistency between policy choices and cognitive maps: 'A *consistent policy choice* is defined as the setting of a policy variable to a certain value so that all causal effects, direct or indirect, have a positive effect on utility. For a policy choice to be

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consistent, the paths that connect it to the utility variables must be balanced. Path balance is therefore a prerequisite for consistency as defined above.'[250]

In the example above, the path has three positive and one negative relationship: it becomes more difficult to suppress communalism as anger and passion increases (positive), the creation of an artificial myth is an obstacle (negative), this myth is generated by the goals and actions of the educated classes (positive), the actions of the educated classes generate anger and passion as they seek to enhance their opportunities (positive). According to the rules set out by Axelrod a path with an odd number of negative relationships has a total indirect negative effect on utility and is hence imbalanced.

4. Applied to the case of Nehru and his thinking on religion this exercise implies that while Nehru had very strong views on the role of religion in politics, his logic, as apparent from this example, is not internally consistent. On the one hand he blames irrational 'anger and passion' for giving rise to communalism and at the same time he recognises the strategic instrumentalisation by the 'educated classes'. Given these two very different explanations for communalism it remains unclear how Nehru proposed to go about tackling the problem through concrete policies and institutions. This tension and weakness is prevalent in his writings.

On the topic of religion, Nehru propounded various arguments portraying its negative effects on society and politics. His earliest published volume, *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*, is extremely negative about the role of religion. Describing the origin of religion which, 'first came as fear....But however, much it may have grown, we see even today that people fight and break each other's heads in the name of religion. And for many people it is

[250] Hart, J.A. 'Cognitive Maps of Three Latin American Policy Makers', *World Politics*, Vol.30/1 (Oct. 1977), p. 120.

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still something to be afraid of. They spend their time in trying to please some imaginary beings by making presents in temples and even sacrifices of animals'.[251] Nor did Nehru change his tone depending on the audience. For example, speaking in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, one of Hinduism's holiest cities, and presumably therefore to an audience amongst which there were people who held religion dear, Nehru had the following to say:

'It is strange that for the most trivial things, for childish superstition or silly prejudice people take risks and lose their reason in a sea of anger. The vital things, the real things that matter pass unnoticed. Ignorance and bigotry put an end to all rational thought. It is almost useless to argue or convince. Religion is degraded and in its name are done the most shameful things. Indeed religion has become the excuse for many sins. It has little sanctity left and it is trotted out in season and out of season and all argument naturally ends.'[252]

Another common attack against religion was that it was partly to blame for India's weaknesses and a reason why the region had succumbed to imperial rule. With independence, the country was to wipe the slate clean and start anew by embracing modernity. The radicalism of the early Jawaharlal Nehru shows through particularly in speeches aimed at rousing the young. For example in his presidential address to the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference in 1928, Nehru proclaimed:

'We must aim, therefore, at the destruction of all imperialism and the reconstruction of society on another basis…..Our national ideal must, therefore, be the establishment of a cooperative socialist commonwealth and our international ideal, a world federation of socialist states. Before we approach our ideal, we have to combat two sets of opponents – political and social. We have to overcome our alien rulers as well as the social reactionaries

[251] Nehru, J. *Letters from a Father to his Daughter* (Children's Book Trust, New Delhi, 1981), p. 41.
[252] Gopal, S. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* Series One, Volume2, p.211: Presidential Address at UP Conference, 13 October, 1923.

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of India.....Religion has in the past often been used as an opiate to dull men's desire for freedom….Religion has been the fountain-head of authoritarianism and meek submission.'[253] Similarly, in a Presidential address at the Punjab Provincial Conference in April 1928, Nehru reminded his audience, 'We forget that our ancient civilizations, great as they are, were meant for different ages and different conditions. We cannot have today, in an industrial age, an early agrarian economy, such as we had in Vedic times; much less can we have in our country a civilization meant for a desert country more than 1,300 years ago. And many of our traditions and habits and customs, our social laws, our caste system, the position we give to women, and the dogmas which religion has imposed on us, are the relics of a past, suitable in those far-off days but utterly out of joint with modern conditions'.[254]

At numerous occasions Nehru expressed his firm conviction that religion and religious categories would lose their relevance. For example this crops up during a series of articles written between 1933 and 1934, published in various newspapers. In response to Muhammad Iqbal who had accused Gandhi of preventing Muslims and the '*Harijans*'[255] from making common cause at the Round Table Conference, Nehru stated 'Personally, I am not interested in religious labels and I am sure that they will soon disappear, or, at any rate, cease to have any political significance'.[256] Such statements, of course with the benefit of hindsight, imply a deep misjudgement of his people and their socio-cultural conditions. Nehru went on to define his outlook which 'is not religious and I find it difficult to think of groups in terms of religion. Sir Mohammad evidently does so to the exclusion of other and more modern ways of thinking, and I am afraid he confuses religion with race and culture.'[257]

[253] Gopal, Series One, Volume 3, pp. 206-7, December 1928.
[254] Gopal, Series One, Volume 3, p. 221, April 1928.
[255] Literally 'children of god'. The term used by Gandhi to refer to the untouchables or the casteless.
[256] Nehru, *Recent Essays and Writings* (Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1934), p. 62.
[257] Ibid. p. 63.

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The unity of India was a central concern for Nehru during this period and almost all his books deal with this theme either from a historical, cultural angle or in terms of the success of a *national* freedom movement. Though it is not mentioned explicitly, secularism does begin to appear within Nehru's vision as the glue for holding a state such as India together and providing the basis for a national consciousness, overcoming 'numerous superficial differences'.[258] The early Nehru did demonstrate an awareness for the challenges in establishing a level-playing field where the majority community makes compromises and the minority community feels protected and not dis-advantaged. However, as Nehru himself pointed out in his retort to Iqbal, 'What are these minimum safeguards (for the protection of a minority) and who is to decide them? The minority itself?.....How are we to know what the minority community really desires? Are we to take the opinion of any small group claiming to represent the community? And when there are several such groups, what are we to do?'[259] Precisely these questions were to return in the 1950s when Nehru attempted to create the institutional foundations for a secular state although, as will be seen later on, the impasse created by the Hindu Code Bill reflected some serious miss-calculations.

Much later on, Nehru's writings in prison reflected a deepening faith in modernisation and a 'scientific rationalism'. Hence the scientific approach was described by Nehru as 'the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, the capacity to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence, the reliance on observed fact and not on pre-conceived theory, the hard discipline of the mind – all this is necessary, not merely for the application of science but for life itself and the solution of its many problems."[260] Whilst in contrast, the methods employed by religion were seen as compounding society's problems,

[258] Ibid. p. 65.
[259] Ibid. p. 66.
[260] Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Nehru Memorial Fund, New Delhi, 4th edition, 1985), p. 512.

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"Concerned as it is principally with the regions beyond the reach of objective inquiry, it relies on emotion and intuition. And then it applies this method to everything in life, even to those things which are capable of intellectual inquiry and observation. Organised religion, allying itself to theology and often more concerned with vested interests than with things of the spirit, encourages a temper which is the very opposite to that of science. It produces narrowness and intolerance, credulity and superstition, emotionalism and irrationalism. It tends to close and limit the mind of man, and to produce a temper of a dependent, unfree person."[261]

Although Nehru had his differences with Gandhi he chose not to publicise them too much. One such occasion when he did articulate his disagreement with Gandhi's goals and methods occurred in September 1932 when Gandhi went on a "fast unto death" on the subject of separate electorates for India's "depressed classes" which Gandhi considered to be a British attempt to divide and undermine Indians along further cleavages. Nehru, on the other hand, considered this to be a 'side issue', writing in his *Autobiography*, that he 'felt angry with Bapu at his religious and sentimental approach to a political question.....And his frequent references to God – God has made him do this – God even indicated the date of the fast.....What a terrible example to set!'[262]

Despite this deeply-held view of religion producing obfuscation, and something which must inevitably fade away with modernisation, there are strong inconsistencies in Nehru's thinking on the subject of religion, religiosity and the need for reform. This comes out most clearly in the different assumptions underlying his diagnoses and recommendations for India's Muslim and Hindu communities. Hence, he posited that, "a special responsibility

[261] Ibid., p. 513.
[262] Gopal, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, September 22, 1932, Series One, Volume 5, p. 408.

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does attach to the Hindus in India both because they are the majority community and because economically and educationally they are more advanced."[263] However, while Hindus are berated for having fallen behind the rest of the world because of inherently retrograde social customs like the caste system and unnecessary mystification, the particular Muslim trauma had to be treated differently given that it suffered from exogenous shocks. The following needs to be quoted at length as it captures this sentiment:

"Moslems have produced few outstanding figures of the modern type. They have produced some remarkable men but, as a rule, these represented the continuation of the old culture and tradition and did not easily fit in with modern developments. This incapacity to march with the changing times and adapt themselves culturally and otherwise to a new environment was not of course due to any innate failing. It derived from certain historical causes, from the delay in the development of a new industrial middle class, and the excessively feudal background of the Moslems, which blocked up avenues of development and prevented the release of talent. In Bengal the backwardness of the Moslems was most marked, but this was obviously due to two causes: the destruction of their upper classes during the early days of British rule, and the fact that the vast majority were converts from the lowest class of Hindus, who had long been denied opportunities or growth and progress."[264]

As a result, the narratives Nehru constructed to explain the weaknesses of religious communities to cope with modernity rest on different explanatory variables. On the one hand Hinduism is portrayed as inherently backward whilst the fate of Islam is to be empathised with because of the negative outcomes resulting from its encounter with British rule. This lopsidedness persists through most of Nehru's writings and into his years of policy-making as prime minister. For example, although communalism was condemned by Nehru both in its

[263] Gopal Series One, Volume 6, p168, Article in *The Tribune*, 30 November, 1933.
[264] Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Nehru Memorial Fund, New Delhi, 4th edition, 1985), p. 390.

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Hindu and Muslim variants, the harsher criticism was always maintained for the Hindu Mahasabha.

Another instance of bias arises in his book, *The Discovery of India*, where Nehru devotes quite a few pages to 'secular' thinkers and movements like that of Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Annie Besant, but hardly acknowledges the important reform movements of the *Brahmo Swaraj* and *Arya Samaj*[265] which were more explicitly based on Hindu philosophy, Hindu practices and ideals.[266] On the Muslim front however, Nehru lauds the more religious reform movements like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, leader of the Aligarh Movement[267] as well as more secular Muslim leaders like Abdul Kalam Azad.[268] Recognising the psychological dilemmas that Indian Muslims faced over matters of history and questions of allegiance, Nehru wrote with compassion for the challenges they must have faced. For, "to begin with, the new middle classes were almost absent among the Moslems. Their avoidance of western education, their keeping away from trade and industry, and their adherence to feudal ways, gave a start to the Hindus which they profited by and retained. ….The Revolt of 1857 was a joint affair, but in its suppression Moslems felt strongly, and to some extent rightly, that they were the greater sufferers. This Revolt also put an end finally to any dreams or fantasies of the revival of the Delhi Empire."[269]

Underlying this analysis was his deep conviction that, if it were not for opportunist trouble-makers and reactionary stakeholders, people would respond automatically and primarily to universal economic incentives. Living under modern conditions, Nehru appeared to grant no intrinsic need for spiritual, non-material beliefs. In challenging the Hindu

[265] The *Brahmo Samaj* and *Arya Samaj* movements were both important Hindu reform movements founded in the mid-nineteenth century.
[266]Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Nehru Memorial Fund, New Delhi, 4th edition, 1985), pp. 335 - 41.
[267] A movement launched in the mid-nineteenth century to educate Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent.
[268] Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2004), pp. 380 – 383.
[269] Ibid. p. 375.

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Mahasabha leader, Bhai Parmanandji, Nehru asked the following: 'In the modern world, trains, cars and aeroplanes have almost abolished boundaries and built world unity. Books, newspapers, the telegraphy, radio and cinema influence us and gradually change our ideas….I want to know from Bhaiji what is the stand of our old Hinduism on all these matters? He talks about religion and caste civilisations. But the civilization of the modern world is that of mighty machinery and gigantic workshops. What have they to do with religions?"[270]

To summarise, the central concept within Nehru's assessment and understanding of religion is that of rationality. The scientifically rational person, is epistemologically speaking, someone whose relation to knowledge and reality is primarily positivist and material. Hence, religion is portrayed in various negative ways as (a) a veneer, (b) an instrument for power politics and, (c) a source of dogmatism and debilitation. In each case the implication is that religion contributes to irrational behaviour and this applied to both Muslims and Hindus. At the same time Nehru was committed to the argument that material not spiritual factors ultimately account for people's behaviour. In a series of articles on The Unity of India, Nehru writes that the Muslims are only technically a minority: 'They are vast in numbers and powerful in other ways, and it is patent that they cannot be coerced against their will, just as the Hindus cannot be coerced against their will.....But let us always remember that in political and economic matters people do not function as religious groups. The lines of cleavage are different'.[271]

[270] Gopal Series One, Volume 6, p. 456. Written from Almora District Jail, 6 August, 1935, in response to an article by Bhai Parmanandji.
[271] Nehru, Jawaharlal, *The Unity of India* (Lindsay Drummond, London, 1942), p. 386.

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Translating such a stance into concrete policy recommendations is problematic since in Nehru's ideal state of the world, religion would simply cease to play a role. In the quote with which this section began, Nehru portrays Communalism as 'a giant with feet of clay.....and when we regain our tempers it will fade into nothingness'. How to convince a population of this, for whom religion had long been a central institution and an important mechanism facilitating exchange and providing social organisation? However, rather than focusing upon this as a key policy concern and the need to develop mechanisms and strategies to bring about a gradual process of change, Nehru appears to have regarded 'social' change to be, by and large, a by-product of 'economic' change. Thus Nehru could claim that the caste system, which had withstood centuries of challenges, was facing an existential threat: "That is not chiefly because of some powerful urge to reform itself which has arisen in Hindu society…nor is it because of ideas from the west…The change that is taking place before our eyes is due essentially to basic economic changes which have shaken up the whole fabric of Indian society and are likely to upset it completely."[272]

However, in one of his later pieces of writing, *The Unity of India,* Nehru simply states that "There is no religious or cultural conflict in India. What is called the religious or communal problem is really a dispute among upper-class people for a division of the spoils of office or of representation in a legislature."[273] Given that he saw this essentially as a problem of elites and resources, the envisioned solution, presumably, would not need to deal with intangibles and imponderables such as identity and values. In other words, Nehru could quite comfortably and confidently say, that 'This will surely be settled amicably wherever it

[272] Nehru, *The Discovery of India,* (Jawaharlal Memorial Fund, New Delhi, 4th edition, 1985), p. 246.
[273] Nehru, Jawaharlal *The Unity of India* (Lindsay Drummond, London, 1942), p. 20.

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arises'.[274] This is markedly different from his approach towards economic planning which foresaw the possible objections, hurdles, and the need for consensus-building.

Strangely, in the area of social reform, Nehru seemed to revert most closely to policies initiated by the British, an indication, this thesis proposes, of the limited expertise and understanding that Nehru had for the problem. This leads to the controversial proposition that despite being hailed as founder of a secular state, Nehru contributed very little in terms of actually institutionalising secularism. For instance on the topic of reforming Hindu Law he presents the following criticism of the British strategy that codified customary law: "customs change and are forced to adapt themselves to some extent to a changing environment. Hindu law was largely custom, and as custom changed the law also was applied in a different way. Indeed, there was no provision of Hindu law which could not be changed by custom. The British replaced this elastic customary law by judicial decisions based on the old texts and Brahmanic interpretations, and these decisions became precedents which had to be rigidly followed. That was, in theory, an advantage, as it produced greater uniformity and certainty, But, in the manner it was done, it resulted in the perpetuation of ancient law unmodified by subsequent customs…….Change could only come by positive legislation, but the British Government, which was the legislating authority, had no wish to antagonize the conservative elements on whose support it counted."[275]

Nehru was aware of the shortcomings of a project, where codification had drastically restricted the capacity for change and adaptation. In his efforts later to introduce the Hindu code bills in the mid to late fifties, Nehru was so convinced of the rational righteousness of his judgement that he forgot these two important lessons that the British experience should

[274] Ibid., p. 20.
[275] Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (1985), p. 330.

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have provided: (1) codification as a form of petrification and, (2) legislation as a product of lobbying that is bound to skew original reformist intentions. Furthermore, since Nehru did not initiate any process of consensus-building or fact-finding (as he did in the case of planning), the Hindu code bill was quickly framed within a highly polarised debate pitting 'modernists' and 'reformists' against 'reactionaries' and 'revivalists'. As will be shown in chapter seven, Nehru's attempts to reform Hinduism and the application of Hindu law, fell far short of his expectations.

3.4.2. Nehru on Economic Development and Socialism

Encountering the fashionable creed of Fabianism during his student days in London through people like Harold Laski at the London School of Economics, the young Jawaharlal Nehru was full of radical ideas. Visiting Russia in 1928 together with his father, Motilal Nehru, a series of articles by Jawaharlal Nehru were published in various Indian newspapers and then compiled into a book titled, *Soviet Russia. Some Random Sketches and Impressions*. Admitting a 'fascination for Russia', he wrote that the conditions in Russia have not been and continued to be not very dissimilar to those in India: 'Both are vast agricultural countries with only the beginnings of industrialisation , and both have to face poverty and illiteracy. If Russia finds a satisfactory solution for these, our work in India is made easier'.[276] The 'economic interpretation of history', or 'historic materialism' appealed greatly to the young Nehru and his later works often allude to the need to explore the economic as well as political roots of problems. For instance in an essay titled, *Whither India*, written in 1934 there are numerous references to class interests and the inevitable conflict over what freedom meant to "feudal India of the princes, the India of the big zamindars, of small zamindars, of the

[276] Nehru, J. *Soviet Russia. Some Random Sketches and Impressions* (Allahabad Law Journal Press, 1928), p. 5.

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professional classes, of the agriculturalists, of the industrialists, of the bankers, of the lower middles class, of the workers."[277]

Not much time is spent in Nehru's writings discussing details or grappling with theoretical works either by Laski or Marx (who presumably had an impact on him) and instead he propounded a more personal and rather vague interpretation of socialism. Hence in the same article mentioned above, *Whither India*, Jawaharlal analyses the world situation in the following terms, 'capitalism, having solved the problem of production, helplessly faces the allied problem of distribution and is unable to solve it.....To find a solution for distributing wealth and purchasing power evenly is to put an end to the basic inequalities of the capitalist system and to replace capitalism itself by a more *scientific* system.' (italics added).[278]

Similarly, in his 1936 presidential address to the INC, Nehru claimed, *"I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problem and of India's problems lies in socialism, and when I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense. Socialism is, however, something even more than an economic doctrine; it is a philosophy of life and as such also appeals to me. I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism. That involves vast and revolutionary changes in our political and social structure, the ending of vested interests in land and industry, the ending of private property, except in a restricted sense, and the replacement of the present profit system by a higher ideal of cooperative service. It means ultimately a change in our instincts and habits*

[277] "Whither India", reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings. On the Future of India, Communalism and Other Subjects* (Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1934), p. 4.
[278] Ibid. 15.

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and desires. In short, it means a new civilization, radically different from the present capitalist order."[279]

Since this is a representative quotation of the young Nehru it is used as a template for analysing his belief system in the area of economic policy.

The conceptual variables in the above quote are the following:

A. Solving the world's and India's problems (goal variable)
B. Socialism (utility variable) i.e. a 'higher ideal of cooperative service'
C. Ending 'poverty, unemployment, degradation, subjection' (goal variable)
D. Change in the political and social structure (policy variable)
E. Change in instincts, habits and desires (policy variable)
F. New Civilisation (utility & goal variable)

The direct correspondence between variables are the following:

1. Solution of world and India's problems lies in socialism B $\xrightarrow{+}$ A (positive relationship)
2. *More* Socialism will enable the *ending* of poverty etc: B $\xrightarrow{-}$ C (negative relationship)
3. Change in structure, i.e. the *ending* of vested interests, ending of private property will bring about '*higher* ideal of cooperative service': D $\xrightarrow{-}$ B (negative relationship)
4. Ending poverty, unemployment, degradation entails will a change in instincts, habits and desires (both positive values): C $\xrightarrow{+}$ E
5. Change (*improvement*) in instincts, habits, desires will give rise to a *new* civilisation: E $\xrightarrow{+}$ F (positive relationship)

[279] Gopal, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* Series One, Volume 7, (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1972), p. 170: Nehru's Presidential Address at Lucknow, 12 April, 1936. See Appendix for a full reprint of this speech.

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The following observations can be drawn:

1. As mentioned earlier an important characteristic to look for in cognitive maps is path-balance, in other words the degree to which parallel paths between pairs of variables have the same sign. This is meant to indicate the consistency of a policy choice. The above set of relations produces an even number of negative relationships which, according to Axelrod's calculations is equivalent to a double reversal, producing indirectly a positive effect that indicates path-balance. The key inference to be drawn is that there is an internally consistent path between the goal, policy and utility variables. By analysing the extract on economic policy it can be inferred that even at an early stage, Nehru's thinking on economic matters was more complex and coherent.
2. Unlike his views on religion, Nehru's writing on economic ideas contains a clear picture of the goals to be achieved and the instruments and steps needed. Hence, there is a selection of goal and policy variables.

It is nevertheless noteworthy that the term socialism remained under-specified in Nehru's speeches and public pronouncements through the 1930s and 40s for although Jawaharlal Nehru believed that the freedom struggle was, in addition to being a political challenge, also an economic battle against special class privileges and vested interests, he was careful not to rattle Congress party members with too much talk of radicalism. In 1934, for instance when Subhas Chandra Bose formed the Congress Socialist Party, Nehru pointedly chose to remain outside it, unwilling to isolate himself from the main centre of power politics, the INC and power-holders like Gandhi. Statements such as the following made to the press in 1936 were rare: "What I seek is an elimination of the profit motive in society and

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its replacement by a spirit of social service, cooperation taking the place of competition, production for consumption instead of for profit."[280] While the concepts underpinning Nehru's vision of Socialism remain relatively under-developed, it is interesting to note that his thoughts on how to formulate and apply a socialist outlook to economic policy are extensive. What are striking are the institutional requirements and the need for consensus-building which Nehru recognised to be important early on in his consideration of the challenges to and conditions necessary for economic development.

Contributing in 1937 to a book on India's envisioned federal structure, he made the following comments about the need for a National Economic Council: "A modern government has to face difficult economic problems and to undertake complicated tasks which require careful thought and expert guidance.....The national economic council could also be entrusted with the task of planning the economic life of the community under the general direction and supervision of the federal government. This task is a stupendous one and it may be necessary to create a special planning commission for the purpose."[281] Most importantly he went on to emphasize the need for a broad base of representatives, reflecting interests across the board, including "representatives of the federating units and also representatives of special interests, such as chambers of commerce or industry, agriculture, trade unions of industrial workers, peasant organisations, professional and technical associations, and scientific experts."[282]

And, this was not merely empty rhetoric. In December 1938 a National Planning Committee was formed. Already after its first meeting a questionnaire was issued to all participants for feedback on the general line of action and the type of planning. Aware of the

[280] Gopal, Series One, Vol. 7, p283, Statement to the Press, 5 June, 1936.
[281] Gopal, Series One, Volume 8, p.604: A summary of conclusions and recommendations by Nehru for a book , *Federal Structure* (Bombay, 1937), edited by K.T.Shah.
[282] Ibid.

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possible backlash against radical ideas Nehru realised there was a need to convince people first and thus plotted his steps accordingly: "If we start with the dictum that only under socialism there can be planning, we frighten people and irritate the ignorant. If, on the other hand, we think in terms of planning apart from socialism and thus inevitably arrive at some form of socialism, that is a logical process which will convert many who are weary of words and slogans."[283] A year later, Nehru was still committed to the task of gradually laying the foundations and the seeds for a planned economy in India of the future. Thus, "the super-structure will inevitably come later. But if even the foundation is laid in men's minds a great national task will have been done.....Ultimately it is not the Committee that will decide the future of India or of its political or economic organisation but the people of India who will take the final decision. It is for them, therefore, to pay attention to what this Committee is doing. Perhaps one of the most important and desirable consequences of our work is to make people think of planned work and cooperative society.'[284]

The extent of thought and analysis that is reflected in Nehru's writing on the issue of economic planning is truly remarkable in comparison with the highly opinionated and categorical statements made concerning the role of religion and the need for social reform. In a section of *The Discovery of India* entirely devoted to the National Planning Committee, Nehru makes four essential discoveries about the process of consensus-building. In the first place he recognised the complexity of the issue at stake. Thinking about how to solve economic problems required a multi-dimensional view with an understanding of how poverty, unemployment, economic regeneration, even national defence needed an all-encompassing approach providing for the development of heavy, key industries, medium scale industries, and cottage industries, as well as agriculture and in addition, social services.

[283] Gopal, Series One, Volume 9, p.374-5: May 13, 1939.
[284] Gopal, Series One, Volume 11, p.300-1: Statement to Press, Bombay, 15 May, 1940.

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He writes how 'one thing led to another and it was impossible to isolate anything or to progress in one direction without corresponding progress in another. The more we thought of this planning business, the vaster it grew in its sweep and range till it seemed to embrace almost every activity.'[285]

The second critical realisation related to the problem of managing a body that represented so many different interests and perspectives. The way out that Nehru identified was one that envisioned the possibility of synergy emerging from conflict and discussion: 'We decided to consider the general problem of planning as well as each individual problem concretely and not in the abstract, and allow principles to develop out of such considerations.'[286]

Thirdly, Nehru recognised the value of fact-finding for 'It did not very much matter even if there were two or more reports, provided that all the available facts were collected and coordinated, the common ground mapped out, and the divergences indicated.'[287] And finally, despite the conflict in opinions and approaches, the Committee would have played an invaluable role for, 'When the time came for giving effect to the Plan, the then existing democratic government would have to choose what basic policy to adopt. Meanwhile a great deal of essential preparation would have been made and the various aspects of the problem placed before the public and the various provincial and state governments'.[288]

In addition, a distinctive approach to the question of economic development seems to have been Nehru's willingness to accept a degree of flexibility and experimentation. This is

[285] Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (1985), p. 396.
[286] Ibid., p. 396.
[287] Ibid., p. 397.
[288] Ibid., p. 397.

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different compared to the dogmatic instructions that characterise his writing on reforming Hindu institutions, and the rather passionate conviction of his reflections on the world situation and India's place in it. For example the essence of planning being 'a large measure of regulation and coordination……no special rule was laid down but it was made clear that the very nature of planning required control in some measure, which might vary with the industry'.[289] And, on land policy, 'Cooperative farming could be combined either with individual or joint ownership. A certain latitude was allowed for various types to develop so that, with greater experience, particular types might be encouraged more than others.'[290]

As a result of this comparatively flexible approach, it is possible to imagine that in the process of policy implementation, if one method failed, there were alternatives to fall back on without the overall goals of the entire project having to be abandoned. Furthermore, because of the efforts at consensus-building there was less risk of reaching a dead-lock.

3.4.3. Nehru on Foreign policy and Internationalism

Since, in his early writings Nehru did not explicitly discuss the foreign policy aspirations and tools that an independent India might implement, it is necessary to examine his more general appraisal of world politics. For instance, the extensive quotation below offers an insight into his perception of international affairs at the time and the global dynamics driving, hindering and determining world politics. A cognitive map derived from this enables a partial construction of Nehru's worldview. Written during his time in prison in 1934 in the form of letters to his daughter, *Glimpses of World History* reveals Nehru's

[289] Ibid., p. 398.
[290] Ibid., p. 399.

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approach to history, which he regarded as the 'story of man's struggle with living'.[291] In the penultimate chapter of the book, Nehru purveyed the state of affairs in Europe:

"The whole past tendency has been towards greater interdependence between nations, a greater internationalism. Even though separate independent national States remained, an enormous and intricate structure of international relations and trade grew up. This process went so far as to conflict with the national States and with nationalism itself. The next natural step was a socialised international structure. Capitalism, having had its day, had reached the stage when it was time for it to retire in favour of socialism. But unhappily such a voluntary retirement never takes place. Because crisis and collapse threatened it, it has withdrawn into its shell and tried to reverse the past tendency towards interdependence. Hence economic nationalism."[292]

The conceptual variables identified in the above quote are the following:

A. Interdependence (utility variable)
B. Internationalism (utility variable)
C. Separate independent national States (periphery variable)
D. Structure of international relations and trade (policy variable)
E. The national State and nationalism (periphery variable)
F. Socialised international structure (goal variables)
G. Capitalism (policy variable)
H. Socialism (goal variables)
I. Crisis and collapse (periphery variable)
J. Economic nationalism. (policy variable)

[291] Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1982), p. 58.
[292] Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1982), pp. 946 - 7. See Appendix for a reprint of Nehru's chapter.

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Based on the text above, the main causal relations observed are:

1. *Greater* independence leads to *greater* internationalism: A $\xrightarrow{+}$ B (positive relationship)
2. *Despite* there being separate national states, a structure of international relations and trade did emerge: C $\xrightarrow{-}$ D (negative relationship)
3. The national State and nationalism conflicts with the process of international relations and trade: E $\xrightarrow{-}$ D (negative relationship)
4. Nevertheless, this ought to have generated a socialised international structure: D $\xrightarrow{+}$ F (positive relationship)
5. But Capitalism does not give way to Socialism: G $\xrightarrow{-}$ H (negative relationship)
6. Instead Crisis and Collapse threatens Capitalism I $\xrightarrow{-}$ G (negative relationship)
7. The weakening of Capitalism in turn generates Economic Nationalism: G $\xrightarrow{+}$ J (positive relationship)
8. Economic Nationalism reverses the trend towards interdependence. J $\xrightarrow{-}$ A (negative relationship)

The subsequent observations are interesting to note.

1. On the issue of world affairs, Nehru makes use of a number of conceptual variables, most of which he does not de-construct or explain. Hence, it is not clear how he measures interdependence and what in observable terms, constitutes greater internationalism.
2. While there is a clear goal variable (a socialised international structure) this is not specified in terms of what this entails and how it would differ from the existing structure of international relations.

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3. Nor is it apparent who the actors are. Instead, Nehru refers to grand processes such as Capitalism, Economic Nationalism, Crisis and Collapse as the motors of change.
4. While this extract does not seem to contain a causal cycle (A causes B, B causes C, and C causes A) there is a dense interconnection between the variables. This suggests that Nehru's thoughts on the subject were rather opaque. On the one hand he identifies the progression of interdependence as the source of greater internationalism and a step towards a 'socialised international structure' and, at the same time he observes obstacles that seem to have been generated by the process itself. Nehru does not provide a way out except to later on refer to 'the idealism of working for a great human purpose'.[293] This rather non-committal position persists in Nehru's writing and speeches on world affairs and the dynamics of international politics.

Given that the major cause for conflict was the psychosis of fear, Nehru envisioned the major goal of diplomacy to be to persuade states of the world to cease their practice of mutual condemnation and recrimination. In his view, any state that based its foreign policy on the traditional conception of power politics was destined to work against its true national interests. Hence, Nehru was staunchly against the realists of his time such as Sir Halford McKinder, the British geopolitician, Nicholas J. Spykman, the American geopolitician, Walter Lippmann, the American journalist. Nehru did not think foreign policy should only be about power and, that values such as justice, fairness, tolerance should not only serve the power objective. Lippmann's geopolitical conception of alliances[294] was also dismissed by Nehru: 'Such a proposal looks very clever and realistic' he wrote, 'yet is supremely foolish, for it is based on the old policy of expansion and empire and the balance of power which

[293] Ibid. p. 947.
[294] See Lippmann, W. *U.S. Foreign Policy. Shield of the Republic*. (Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1943), chapterVI. "The Structure of the American Position".

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inevitably leads to conflict and war'.[295] The traditional effort of states practicing power politics through encircling their rivals did not seem like a realistic practice to Nehru either. Since the world was round, every country was inevitably encircled by others and there was always a potential danger of encirclement. This was seen by Nehru to be a 'continuation of old tradition' in the style of European power politics, leading him to critique Realist thinkers and policy-makers for sticking to the 'empty shell of the past' and refusing to 'understand the hard facts of the present'[296].

Anticipating the 'English School' of the 1950s which proclaimed the need for a *via media* between realism and liberalism or utopianism, Nehru's writing on international relations contained both pragmatic and radical, revolutionary elements. While he did not at aim at overhauling the Westphalian system of states, or herald the end of conflict altogether, he emphasised the need for international society[297]. This was to be achieved through a transformation of the psychological atmosphere from being one permeated by hostility, suspicion and fear to one infused with rationalism, tolerance, friendliness and cooperation. The 'habit of being moderate in language' as cultivated by Gandhi during the freedom struggle, ought to become characteristic of diplomacy he wrote in his book, *Unity of India*. What is interesting and which also echoes the amalgam that the English School sought to provide, was the fact that Nehru and his contemporaries, such as Subhas Chandra Bose, did not necessarily see a conflict between nationalism and internationalism. On the one hand fervent nationalists, fighting for the freedom of their nation, these individuals criticised the nation-state system founded on national interests. Emerging perhaps from the collective experience of colonialism and liberation, the most important manifestation of this nascent

[295] Nehru, *Discovery of India*, pp. 551 – 2.
[296] Ibid., p. 538.
[297] For parallels with the English Schools see, Martin Wight, *Power Politics* which was initially published as a pamphlet in 1946.

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internationalism came in the form of advocating Asian unity and regionalism. Nehru was the most articulate early post-war advocate of Asian unity, which he saw as the inevitable restoration of cultural and commercial links across Asia that had been violently disrupted by colonialism. A strong theme in his books, he organized the Asian Relations Conferences of 1947 and 1949, the latter being specifically aimed at putting international pressure on the Dutch to grant independence to Indonesia. Interestingly, although Non-alignment was to become a core pillar of his foreign policy later on, it does not feature at all in his books or in his articles of the 1920s, 30s and early 40s.

Using the British Empire as a point of reference, Nehru tried to draw lessons for example from British India's frontier policy: 'the frontier of India and the lands beyond are regarded by the government as a probable theatre of war, and all their policy is directed to strengthening themselves for war purposes....The military mind, ignoring political and psychological factors, thinks only in terms of extending the bounds of an empire and thus making it safer from attack. As a matter of fact this process often ends in weakening a country or an empire..... All this has led to the so-called "Forward policy" at the frontier and because of this every excuse is good enough to be utilised for a forward move.....This forward policy becomes an intense preparation for war, for the great war that is prophesied for the not distant future.....The forward policy has another aspect, a communal one. Just as the canker of communalism, fostered by imperialism, weakens and injures public life and our struggle for freedom so also the forward policy introduces that canker at the frontier and creates trouble between India and her neighbours.'[298] It is of course puzzling or perhaps ironic that much

[298] Gopal, Series One, Volume 8, p459: Statement to the Press, 22 June, 1937.

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later on, it was Nehru's own 'forward policy' on the Sino-Indian border that was seen by the Chinese as provocative and used as a reason to launch the 1962 war.[299]

Living through tumultuous times it is understandable that Nehru's views were to be affected by his perception of the injustices witnessed and the events leading up to World War Two. A strong streak of internationalism pervades a lot of his analysis of foreign policy in general and in particular with regards his ideals for India's standing in the world. Developing an internationalist outlook was considered by Nehru to be vital in order to avoid a narrow nationalism which threatened to be 'an escape sought in dreams of the past...the golden age of past times, of *Rama Raj'*[300].[301] However, at the same time there are occasions when the internationalism was given unnecessary emphasis. For example the 'Quit India' resolution adopted by the All-India Congress Committee on 8th August 1942 bore the imprint of Nehru's thinking: 'The Committee approves of and endorses the resolution...and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.'[302] Why, it was thought necessary to invoke internationalism alongside the most normal of desires and natural rights to be free, is odd and ran the risk of confusing the most basic of national interests with grand internationalist rhetoric.

[299] For an analysis of Nehru's Forward Policy see R.Rajagopalan, "Re-examining the 'Forward Policy' ", in Kumaraswamy, P.R. *Security Beyond Survival* (Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2004).
[300] The 'Rule of Rama' refers to a mythical, golden age of political harmony and virtue.
[301] Nehru, Article published in May 1928, in Gopal, S. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* Volume Three, Series One, (1972), p. 380.
[302] Quit India Resolution in Zaidi, A.M. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*, Volume 12, 1939 – 1946 (Chand & Co., 1981), pp. 390 – 395.

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A sense of camaraderie with China is another strong theme in Nehru's writing which again seems to fit the great importance given to internationalism. The relationship with China was founded upon a feeling of solidarity with a nation and people also engaged in an anti-imperialist struggle: 'Like China, India is aspiring and fighting for national freedom. The forces of national freedom in both countries extend to each other the hand of sympathy and support. They must band themselves together against the urge of imperialism for exploitation and conquest....The ancient friendship of the two peoples of China and India must now be reinforced by the new camaraderie of the two freedom-loving nations.'[303] Nehru nurtured an interest in Chinese history and a number of chapters in his book, *Glimpses of World History* focus on China's development. Discussing the rise and fall of dynasties Nehru proposes various explanations for the process of change, the impetus for which he perceived to be largely endogenous. Hence decline and decay were seen as stemming from inner weaknesses such as corrupt government, decadent elites or even 'too much parental government' which weakened the people.[304]

On a number of occasions China is referred to as India's 'great sister in the East'.[305] However, although Nehru accorded great respect for the achievements and resilience of Chinese culture and in particular admired the secular nature of Chinese society and government, there is an implicit sense of superiority when it comes to the development of political institutions. This is evident for example in the way he treats the founding of the first Chinese Republic under Dr. Sun Yat Sen.[306] Describing the internal tensions within the Kuomintang party Nehru observed how the rivalries and different factions eventually led to the party breaking up, plunging the country into civil war. What is noteworthy is that Nehru

[303] Nehru, J. Newspaper article printed on 21 August, 1938 in Gopal, S. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Volume 9, Series One, p. 209.
[304] Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1982), p. 270.
[305] Ibid. p. 328.
[306] Ibid., see chapter 177, pp. 827 - 34.

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drew no parallels with the case of India and the Congress party. He reveals no anxiety about similar developments afflicting the Indian freedom struggle nor does he mention any lessons to be learned from the experiences of upheaval in China. In other words while waxing eloquent about ancient China and a misty past of sisterhood shared by these two ancient civilisations, there is little about *modern* China, apart from its size, that Nehru explicitly refers to as the basis for a future partnership of equality and friendship with India. One possible explanation for this is an inherent sense of superiority about India's political development. China, in Nehru's writings is usually lauded for its artistic and cultural achievements but not for its great political and organisational abilities for instance its ability to establish and maintain control over such a large empire[307]. Nehru's interpretation of Chinese history bears the same attitude prevalent in the West at the time, that China out of its weakness and decadence had succumbed to superior Western power.

3.5. Conclusion: operationalising a cognitive map .

Through this exercise of examining Nehru's thinking in three different policy areas one is able to identify some of the core ideas that were likely to have influenced Nehru's later choices and preferences. Such an assumption draws upon the work of Axelrod, Shapiro and Alexander George[308] all of whom held that individuals construct a specific rationale for a particular set of actions. While earlier writers such as Alexander George and Nathan Leites used the concept of an 'operational code', the thesis uses the tool of a 'cognitive map' which allows for an analysis of *causal* beliefs or assertions held by the individual. The additional

[307] Hence for instance in the chapter on 'An Age of Peace and Prosperity in China' in Nehru's *Glimpses of World History*, the focus is clearly on China's artistic creativity and not on the abilities of its administrative classes and governance.

[308] See for example: Alexander L. George 'The Operational Code: A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-Making', *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 13/2, June 1969.

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proposition being made here is that by looking at the three 'mini' cognitive maps it is possible to draw comparisons with regards to how far Nehru had conceptualised the three areas of economic development, social reform and foreign policy *prior* to India's independence.

Such an approach offers a marked contrast from the usual biographical accounts of Nehru that are so widely available which simply recount the narrative of his youth and entry into politics. What this chapter has sought to do is identify the actor's beliefs and premises and with the help of a cognitive map to create the prism through which the actor perceived and diagnosed the flow of political events. These beliefs are considered important given that they provide the norms, standards and guidelines that influence the actor's choice of strategy and tactics, his structuring and weighting of alternative courses of action. With regards religion and secularism, Nehru's thought process indicated a tendency towards seeing things in black and white and of understanding problems in terms of stark contrasts. On the subject of economic development and socialism the vision conveyed by Nehru demonstrated a greater concern with policy, the applicability of socialist goals to India and the need to establish consensus-driven methods of attaining socialism. Finally, on the subject of foreign policy there is surprisingly little in his writings and the tendency is towards sweeping statements and comments rather than concrete-policy related and India-specific observations. Having seen that Nehru's vision of a secular, socialist and internationalist, independent India varied greatly in terms of the challenges foreseen and the possible solutions envisioned, it will be easier to explain some of his later tactical choices which will be covered in chapters five, six and seven. Using the Constituent Assembly debates, Nehru's 'vision' will be contextualised in terms of the alternatives that were being voiced and the extent to which his views faced criticism. Before this however, it is necessary to briefly turn to the institutional

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and ideological setting within which Nehru emerged during the 1930s and 40s for it is recognised that the actor's belief system does not unilaterally determine decision-making but that it is an important variable affecting the range of options considered by the actor.

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Chapter Four

Contextualising Nehru: his contemporaries and 'the structure of opportunities'.

4.1. Introduction.

4.2. Organisation of the Indian National Congress.

4.3. Nehru as Congress President: a content analysis of his presidential addresses.

4.4. Nehru's Contemporaries.

4.4.1. Rajendra Prasad

4.4.2. Subhas Chandra Bose

4.4.3. Vallabhbhai Patel

4.5. Consolidating Power: the struggle for dominance.

4.5.1. Nehru's position within the INC: 1947 – 1955.

4.5.2. Nehru as political entrepreneur: transforming the Congress-led movement into a political party

4.6. Conclusion.

4.1. Introduction

Tactically speaking, Nehru was extremely successful given the fact that by the mid-1950s his leadership was virtually uncontested. In this chapter it will be demonstrated how Nehru tailored his 'Vision' in order to minimise the risk of being sidelined within the Congress party whilst at the same time carving out a distinct persona and agenda. To do this, the chapter examines each of Nehru's speeches as Congress President (1929, 1936, 1936/37, 1951, 1953, 1954) and conducts a content analysis to explore the influence of Socialism in Nehru's understanding of world events and as a platform upon which to launch his political

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agenda. The position of Congress president was of particular importance during the years prior to independence. Elected on an annual basis, the role of Congress President provided the individual with an opportunity to define his political persona and to make his beliefs known to a wide audience. At the same time, and in particular during the 1930s, the president-elect had to have Gandhi's backing and hence represented a position of power and prestige. Functioning like a 'government-in-waiting', the Congress body issued resolutions pertaining to organisational matters, responses to current developments as well as setting out general principles conveying the Congress position on policy matters even though the party lacked policy-making capability.

The chapter begins with a description of the key bodies within the Congress structure as it was in the early 1930s. This structure remained in place following independence in 1947 albeit with the addition of the Congress Parliamentary Board. Turning to Nehru's speeches as Congress President, an assessment is made of the extent to which socialism adopted a central place within his rhetoric as the representative of the Congress party. Following this a comparison is drawn with the speeches of three other contemporary presidents: Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose. Such an exercise, it is argued will help contextualise Nehru in terms of contrasting him with other political figures, each of whom was a representative Congress figure in his own right. The chapter begins with the 1930s and ends in the mid-1950s when, it is posited, Nehru was at the peak of his power. For the period following independence two decision-making bodies emerged as important instruments of influence: the Congress Working Committee and the prime minister's cabinet. Both are examined and used as barometers for Nehru's rising power. The conclusion summarises the shifting 'structure of opportunities' and explains the importance of this changing context for the following analyses of individual policies in chapters five, six and seven.

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4.2. Organisation of the Indian National Congress.

In the pre-independence days the Congress organisation consisted of a pyramidal national decision-making structure. At the base were the 21 Provincial Congress Committee (PCC) which were obliged to send a list to the Working Committee of the members qualifies to vote for the delegates who would then represent the PCC at the All-India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.). The numbers of delegates each province was entitled to was set according to whether the province was designated a ‘rural’ or ‘urban’ area and the density of population. The elected delegates of each province were obliged to meet on a specific date and to propose the candidate or candidates for the Presidentship of the Congress for the ensuing year and to elect from among themselves one-twelfth of their number as representatives of the province to the A.I.C.C. The A.I.C.C. was treated as an unofficial parliament, responsible for carrying out the work programme laid down by the Congress from session to session. See the following diagram for an organigram of the Congress party’s organisational structure.

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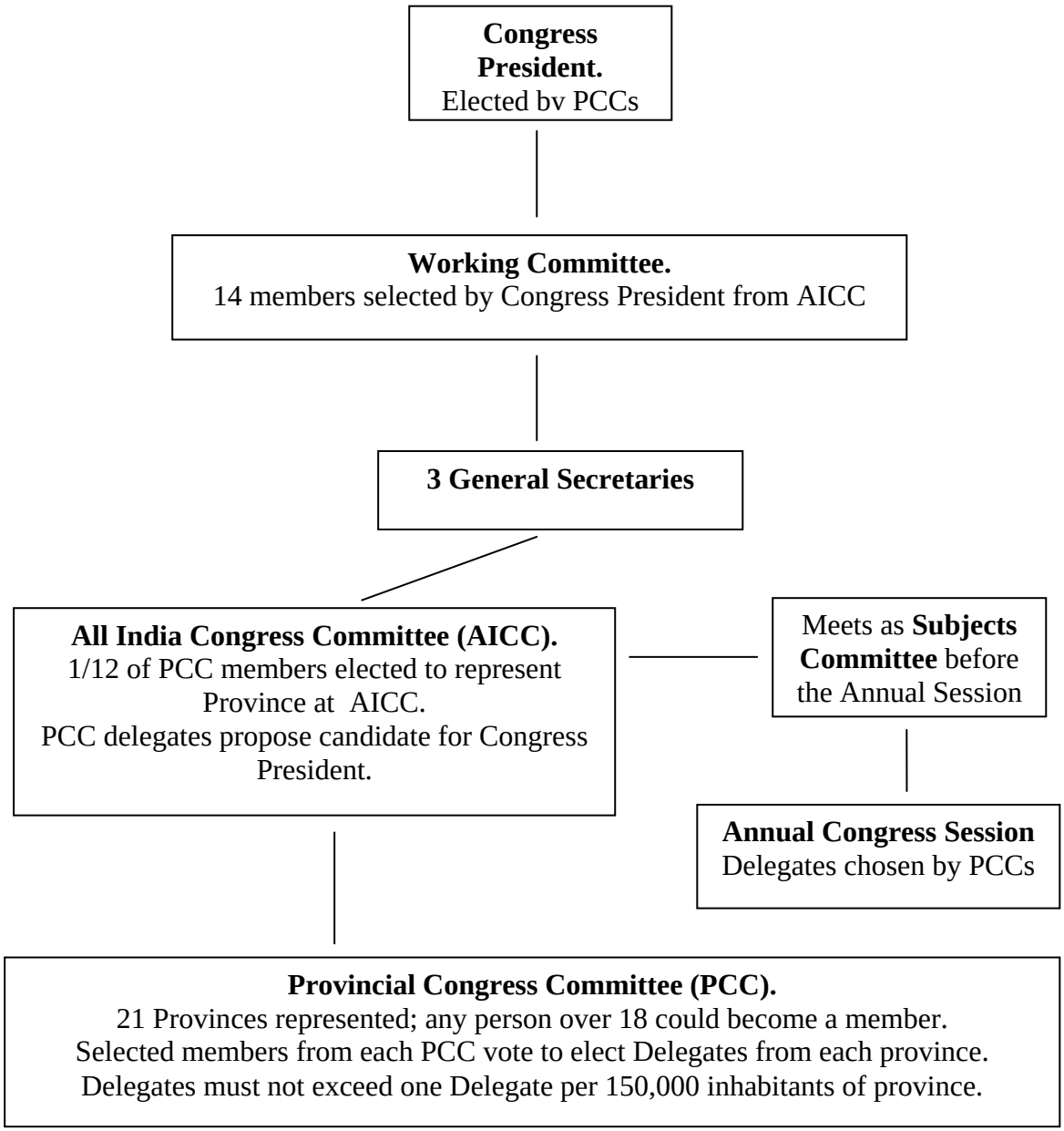
Figure 3: Organigram of Congress Organisational Structure (based on 1934 Congress Party Constitution)



At the apex was the Working Committee, a small executive sub-committee of the A.I.C.C. which acted as the cabinet of the movement. The President was allowed to select fourteen members from among the members of the A.I.C.C. to constitute his Working Committee. Under the 1934 Constitution, the Working Committee was to 'be the executive authority and as such shall have the power to carry into effect the policy and programme laid

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down by the A.I.C.C. and the Congress.' It had the power to (a) frame rules and issue instructions for the proper working of the Constitution; (b) to superintend, direct and control all Congress Committees subject to review by the A.I.C.C.; (c) to take such disciplinary action as it may deem fit against a committee or individual for misconduct, wilful neglect or default.[309]

After tallying the number of votes recorded in favour of all the PCC-recommended candidates, the Working Committee announced the new President-elect. Initially, the President had been chosen annually by an ad hoc committee appointed at the yearly Congress session. After 1934 however, he was elected directly by the delegates, a change introduced by Gandhi who thought a popularly elected President would help centralise leadership and galvanise the movement.[310] In preparation of the Annual Session of the Congress, which all delegates from each province attended, the new A.I.C.C. met as a Subjects Committee a few days before. The out-going Working Committee submitted a draft programme of the work for the upcoming annual session along with the resolutions carried out by the different PCCs. to the President-elect.

Following the formation of the Interim Government in 1946, the setting up of Congress ministries in the states and finally, complete independence in August 1947, the role of the Indian National Congress underwent a dramatic change. This had to be matched with appropriate changes to the organisational set-up so that a new relationship between party and government could be formed. The diagram below depicts the new elements in the Congress structure after independence.

[309] Rao, R. *Development of the Congress Constitution* (A.I.C.C. New Delhi,1958), p.60

[310] Kochanek, S.A. *The Congress Party of India. The Dynamics of One-Party Democracy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968), p. xxiii.

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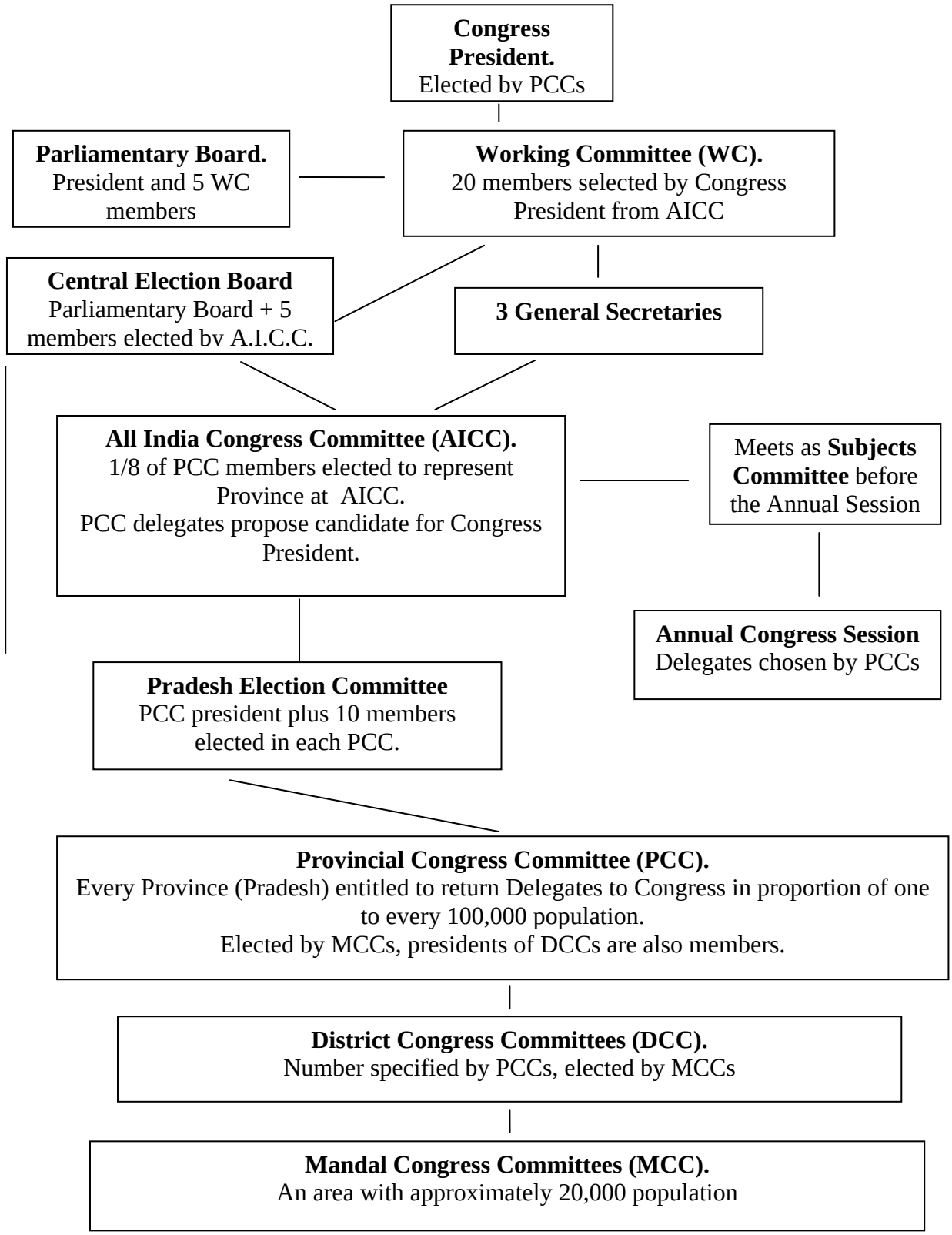
Figure 4: Organigram of Congress Organisation
(based on 1951 Congress Party Constitution)



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To de-centralise the structure, new tiers had been introduced including the District Congress Committee in cities with a population of more than 200,000 and the Mandal Congress Committee. Each Provincial Committee was to return delegates to the Congress in the proportion of one to every 100,000 population from which one eight would act as representatives to the A.I.C.C. The rules for electing the Congress President changed from PCCs proposing candidates to any ten delegates jointly suggesting the name of any delegate for election as President of the Congress. Each delegate was then entitled to vote. The Working Committee was to consist of the President and twenty members, including a Treasurer and one or more General Secretaries. As the highest executive authority of the Congress, the Working Committee had the responsibility of setting up a Parliamentary Board consisting of the Congress President and five other members for the purpose of regulating and co-ordinating parliamentary activities of the Congress Legislature Parties. A Central Election Committee consisting of Parliamentary Board members and five other members elected by the AICC was responsible for conducting election campaigns and making the final selection of candidates for the State and Central legislatures.

As Kochanek describes in his book, *The Congress Party of India. The Dynamics of One-Party Democracy*, there were three phases in the evolution of party-government relations: ‘The first, a period of transition which lasted from 1946 to 1951, was marked by conflict between party and government and by disorder and confusion at the executive level of the party organisation as the Congress sought to adapt a nationalist movement to a political party.’ This was followed by a ‘period of convergence’ where under Nehru’s guidance, the Working Committee ‘came to perform the functions of party-government coordination, centre-state coordination and conflict resolution’. A third phase, ‘a period of divergence saw the development of a certain equilibrium of power between party and government, centre and

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states.'[311] For the purpose of the thesis the focus here is on the first two phases of transformation when the relationship between the Prime Minister and the Congress President was in the process of being redefined and the Working Committee took on a new function. First, the chapter examines Nehru in his capacity as Congress President.

4.3. Nehru as Congress President: a content analysis of his presidential addresses.

No systematic analysis of Nehru's presidential addresses is available in the vast Nehru-related literature. Given that he was elected president three times before and three times after independence, his speeches provide a useful medium through which to examine any notable shifts in his position. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Nehru's worldview and political beliefs drew heavily from the school of Fabien socialism that was popular at the time. Hence, this section seeks to investigate the presence of Nehru's socialist beliefs in his speeches, to explore the way in which he packaged them so as to enhance their appeal to the Congress party while minimising the risk of earning the reputation of being a radical and isolating himself. Throughout the 1930s Nehru was aware of his tenuous position within the Congress establishment given that he had not worked his way up though grassroots activism as had Patel and Prasad nor did he represent a solid regional basis of power, as did Bose (these differences are examined in the following section on his contemporaries). Thus it is interesting to examine how Nehru tailored his 'image' and rhetoric given the compulsions.

[311] Ibid. p. xxiii – xxiv.

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To conduct the content analysis the following steps were followed:

1. Five presidential addresses were examined.
2. The unit of analysis was the word '*socialism'* or '*socialist'*.
3. Only Nehru's direct references to socialism were taken note of, either in terms of his using socialism as a prism through which to understand and explain world politics to his audience or presenting socialism as the source of solutions to India's socio-economic problems.

The following table summarises the main elements in each of Nehru's six presidential addresses along with the direct references made to Socialism.

Table 2: Nehru's Presidential Addresses

Year	Main Elements	Reference to Socialism
1929 Lahore Session	i. The world context: a changing order. ii. India as part of a world movement. iii. The stability of India's social structure & the capacity to adjust to new equilibriums. iv. Most vital question of universal concern is social and economic equality. v. The need to surpass religious differences. vi. Response to British moves: the need for complete independence not dominion status. vii. Three major problems facing India: minorities, Indian states, labour & peasantry viii. Congress must work towards an end to the domination of one class over another viii. Need for cooperation between Congress and Trade Union	Refers to the 'Socialist Ideal' (no definition), simply that the 'philosophy of socialism has gradually permeated the entire structure of society the world over' (p.611). [312]

[312] All page references refer to the respective Volume of Zaidi, A.M. et al (eds.) *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*. (S. Chand & Co. New Delhi, 1980).

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1936 Lucknow Session	i. The world context: post WW1 struggle for social freedom. Emergence of two rival systems: capitalist & fascist versus nationalist & socialist. ii. The need for India to break free from imperialist fold otherwise social change impossible. iii. Criticism of British imperialism: repression, poverty, denial of civil rights, fascist mentality. iv. The need for Congress to revive link with masses / the need to turn away from 'middle-class' concerns & outlook. v. Need to change constitution. vi. Need to instil socialism within movement but through cooperation with other forces. vii. Socialism can conflict with Congress ideology of *khadi* programme. Nehru proposed rapid industrialisation as the solution. viii. On Untouchability & Communalism: an economic solution will remove the social barriers. ix. On reaching the masses: to organise them as producers and affiliate organisations to Congress. x. Problem of agrarian conditions which have become part of international capitalism and suffer from the pains & crises afflicting it.	'The new socialist order of the USSR which went from progress to progress, though often at terrible cost' (p.86) "I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lies in socialism....in the scientific, economic sense." (p. 94) 'Socialism is more than an economic doctrine, it is a philosophy of life... I see no way of ending poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism. That involves vast and revolutionary changes in our political and social structure, the ending of vested interests in land and industry as well as the feudal and autocratic Indian States system.' (p.95) 'I should like the Congress to become a socialist organisation and to join forces with the other forces in the world who are working for the new civilisation' (p96)
1936 Faizpur Session	i. World Report: in Europe events moving closer towards war. ii. Decaying world system has led to new desires to abolish poverty, unemployment, betterment of humanity. iii. The need for mass action/ need functional representation in Congress. Need active participation of organised workers and peasants. iv. The need for a 'great planned system for the whole land and dealing with all these various national activities' (p.199)	'The disease is deep-seated and requires a radical and revolutionary remedy i.e. the socialist structure of society' (p188) 'Backward Russia, with one mighty jump, has established a Soviet Socialist State and an economic order which has resulted in tremendous progress in all directions.' (p.192)
1951 New Delhi Session	i. The interconnection between world events and Indian events, the integration of domestic and foreign policy. ii. India as responsible member of international community: support for UN. iii. The Hindu Code as 'a symbol of this conflict between progress and reaction in the social domain.' (p35)	None

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Nehru took over as president following the resignation of Tandon.	The spirit underlying the Bill 'was a spirit of liberation and of freeing our people and, more especially, our womenfolk.' (p35) iv. The need for 'integrated progress on all fronts, political, economic and social': land reform, social justice, self-sufficiency in food. v. The need for planning: 'Nobody likes controls, but controls on certain things become essential when the acquisitive instincts of some individuals or groups come in the way of public good. Private enterprise has to be related to, and brought into the pattern, of the National plan' (p38) vi. Communalism and separatism as evils resembling fascism. vii. Kashmir to decided by people of Kashmir viii. The need for basic unity but whilst encouraging variations in common culture.	
1953 Hyderabad Session Met after one year gap due to general elections, 1952.	i. India as member of comity of nations: respected and responsible. ii. Basic strength of country stems from economic policy. iii. Foreign policy based on friendly relations with all and no interference. iv. Problems in relations with Pakistan. v. Language policy: formation of linguistic provinces a tricky balance between fostering unity and encouraging separatism. vi. The need to fight poverty & unemployment. The Five Year Plan: special emphasis in agriculture, land reform, creation of community centres. vii. Cold War: India to take positions on Korean War, South Africa.	None
1954 Calcutta Session	i. Korea as a test case of Indian foreign policy, policy of non-alignment. ii. Relations with Pakistan complicated by US offer of military aid. iii. The need to root out communalism, provincialism and casteism: the need for local, village bodies to be more active. iv. Next 5 Year Plan to take on land question and employment. v. The need for methods and techniques suited to the problems of a heavily populated underdeveloped country.	As for nationalisation, most of us accept the broad principles of socialism, though we may not agree on any dogmatic approach to it.' (p.499)

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If one supplements the above analysis of Nehru's speeches with a study of resolutions passed during his time as Congress president it is noteworthy how, over time, the resolutions came to increasingly reflect Nehru's rhetoric and to deal with the issues highlighted in his speeches. The convergence between Nehru's speeches and the resolutions issued by the Congress is taken as evidence of Nehru's increasingly pivotal position on central policy concerns.

Table 3: Key Congress Party Resolutions[313]

Year	Key Resolutions	Convergence with Nehru's interests
1929 Lahore Session	(1) League Against Imperialism: selection of a delegate to be considered next meeting. (2) Organisation of Foreign Department. (3) Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) Day appointed Jan, 26.	(1) An organisation Nehru was active in. (2) Nehru an active proponent of enhancing foreign image and activities of Congress. (3) Nehru the prime proponent of 'Complete Independence'.
1936 Lucknow Session	(1) Confirmed participation in World Committee of struggle against War and Fascism, Geneva Sep, 1937. (2) Announcement of Agrarian programme.	(1) Nehru a proponent of Congress participation. (2) Announced need for thorough change of land tenure and revenue system as advocated by Nehru.
1936 Faizpur Session	(1) Support for World Peace Congress. (2) Sympathy for struggle in Spain expressed.	(1) Attended by Krishna Menon, supported by Nehru. (2) Nehru's emphasis on struggle between fascism and socialism in Spain.

[313] Drawn from Zaidi, A.M. et al (eds.) *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*. (S. Chand & Co. New Delhi, 1980).

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	(3) Frontier Policy. (4) Announced steps towards an All-India Agrarian Programme.	(3) The need to declare friendly policy towards all neighbours. (4) Recognised peasant unions
1951 New Delhi Session Nehru took over as president.	(1) Foreign Policy affirmed. (2) Anti-Social and Disruptive Tendencies. (3) Economic programme approved.	(1) Support for UN, non-Interference & plebiscite in Kashmir. (2) Establishment of secular, democratic state. (3) Economic programme included Draft Five Year Plan.
1953 Hyderabad Session	(1) Foreign Policy and World Situation. (2) Five Year Plan.	(1) Iterated support for China joining UN, India's policy of peace, international cooperation and non-alignment. (2) Most important task is economic advance to realise objectives of social justice and equality.
1954 Calcutta Session	(1) Approval of Korea policy. (2) Colonial domination and racial discrimination. (3) India's Foreign Policy. (4) Planning and Development: approval of 5 Year plan targets.	(1) Billed by Nehru as test case of Indian foreign policy. (2) European domination must be removed as a source of international conflict. (3) India seeks friendship of all and avoidance of entanglements, alignment. (4) Aim of planning to be establishment of Welfare State and full employment.

The first observation that strikes one is the radicalism of the young Congress President. His speeches from 1929 and the two in 1936 were impassioned and daring, openly expressing an admiration for the Soviet Union and the merits of socialism. Aware of the lack of support for him in 1929 (see chapter three) Nehru was nevertheless willing to cast himself

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as the radical reformer who was ready to take on the ‘old guard’ including his father, Pandit Motilal Nehru who had been the Congress President in 1928 and who supported gradual transformation through cooperation with the British and constitutional change. Nehru’s subsequent speeches, in contrast are far more reserved and cautious reflecting a wiser, more guarded politician at work. It is however, interesting to note that by 1954 Nehru felt comfortable again about referring directly to socialism. This propensity grew more marked in the following years as the Congress party was brought securely under his wing. By 1955 Nehru felt secure enough to relinquish the post of Congress president and to hand it over to a loyalist, U.N.Dhebar, who remained Congress president for the next four years.

In 1928 Jawaharlal Nehru’s father, Pandit Motilal Nehru, had been Congress president. Named after him, the Nehru Report issued in the same year, proposed Dominion status for India as an alternative to ‘Complete Independence’. Representing an older generation of leaders who had favoured gradual constitutional change to a revolutionary overthrowing of the system, Motilal Nehru’s presidential speech had been mostly about questions of strategy and how to engage with the British and whether, in settling for Dominion status, this might be a small step in the direction of ultimate independence.

One year later, the period of grace granted by the Nehru report, having met with no response from the British, Jawaharlal Nehru’s election as Congress President was intended to inject a breath of fresh air. In accordance, his presidential speech asserted, ‘The brief day of European domination is already approaching its end...The future lies with America and Asia....India today is a part of the world movement.....we march forward unfettered to our goal....for this Congress is to declare in favour of independence and devise sanctions to

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achieve it.'[314] The first resolution passed at this session announced 'Complete Independence' (*purna swaraj*) as the new goal of Congress and India and, directed all current Congress members of any government legislatures or committees to 'resign their seats'. To establish his credentials as a radical reformer, Jawaharlal declared himself in this speech to be a socialist and a republican. Three major problems were identified by Jawaharlal as issues of the day: the minorities, the Indian States, and labour and peasantry, of which the last was in his opinion, the greatest concern of all.[315] Reflecting a turn towards socio-economic concerns the All India Congress Committee adopted a resolution calling for 'revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structures of society and to remove the gross inequalities.'[316]

The following year at the 1931 Karachi session it is interesting to draw a comparison with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's presidential speech which was altogether more down-to-earth than Nehru's. Much shorter in length, it addressed the practical considerations arising from the *Purna Swaraj* or *Complete Independence* resolution of 1930. 'This independence', Patel explained, 'does not mean, was not intended to mean, a churlish refusal to associate with Britain or any other power. Independence therefore does not preclude the possibility of equal partnership for mutual benefit and dissolvable at the will of either party....I am aware there is a strong body of opinion in the country to the effect that before a partnership could possibly be conceived, there must be a period of complete dissociation. I do not belong to that school. It is, as I think, a sign of weakness and of disbelief in human nature.'[317] Mentioned by Patel only in passing, the Resolution on Fundamental Rights, was a result of Nehru's efforts and

[314] See 1929 Jawaharlal Nehru's presidential address reproduced in Zaidi, A. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*; (Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1980) Volume 9, pp. 601 – 18.
[315] 1929 Jawaharlal Nehru's presidential address reproduced in Zaidi, A. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*; (Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1980) Volume 9, p. 611.
[316] Ibid., p. 623.
[317] Zaidi, A. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*; (Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1980) Volume 10, p. 136.

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would later be described as the first commitment of the Congress to an economic programme.[318] However, the relatively moderate tone and wording reflected the careful balancing act that was at play with Gandhi trying to keep Nehru within the fold of the Congress, whilst tempering his radicalism.

Over the next two years the Congress party annual sessions were hampered by the widespread arrest of many of its leaders and the threat by the Government to break up gatherings. It was only in 1934 that the Congress was able to return to its normal functions and under Rajendra Prasad an attempt was made to revive the campaign. In the aftermath of the 1935 Government of India Act, Jawaharlal returned to India following the death of his wife in Switzerland to preside over the 1936 Lucknow Congress. As in the past, Nehru's speech was longer than other presidential addresses, had a grandstanding style about it and was as much about himself as it was about issues.[319] The 1936 session however, reflected a leaning towards the left wing of the Congress for, in his Working Committee Nehru had managed to install two fellow socialists, Narendra Dev[320] and Achyut Patwardhan. Also in his speech, Nehru made no concessions and stated clearly his preferences and ideological inclination. Hence, having cast the challenges facing him, India and the Congress within the context of global developments, Nehru pronounced, 'I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lies in socialism'.[321]

Going on to explain the 'scientific, economic sense' in which he meant the term socialism, Nehru stated, 'That means the ending of private property, except in a restricted

[318] Ibid. pp. 181-183.
[319] Zaidi, A. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*; (Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1980) Volume 11, pp. 83 – 112.
[320] Leading member of the Congress Socialist Party.
[321] Ibid. p. 95.

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sense, and the replacement of the present profit system by a higher ideal of cooperative service.'[322] Furthermore, 'I have cooperated whole-heartedly in the past with the *khadi* programme and I hope to do so in the future because I believe that *khadi* and village industries have a definite place in our present economy.....But I look upon them more as temporary expedients of a transition stage rather than as solutions of our vital problems.'[323]

Another issue upon which different factions of the Congress were to come to loggerheads on was the question of whether provincial elections, as promised in the 1935 India Act, ought to be contested. Nehru's suggestion was to contest the elections in order to 'carry the message of the Congress to the millions of voters and to the scores of millions of disfranchised'[324] but 'to accept office and ministry, under the conditions of the Act, is to negative our rejection to it and to stand self-condemned. National honour and self-respect cannot accept this position, for it would inevitably mean our cooperation in some measure with the repressive apparatus of imperialism, and we would become partners in this repression and in the exploitation of our people'.[325] A further controversial proposal was that the Congress party amend its constitution to provide for affiliations with separate, functional, peasant and worker organisations so that 'the Congress could have an individual as well as a corporate membership'.[326] The question of functional representation, as a result, became a central issue upon which the conflict between the Congress Socialists and the rightist Gandhians came to be centred.

[322] Ibid., p. 96.
[323] Ibid. p. 97.
[324] Zaidi, A. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*; (Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1980) Volume 11, p. 100.
[325] Ibid., p. 101.
[326] Ibid., p. 108.

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Despite Nehru's public pronouncements on socialism and, his views on how to change the organisation and priorities of the Congress movement, there were limits to the extent of his influence and power. No major resolutions were adopted that year giving effect to Nehru's propositions. Although the election manifesto carried a strong imprint of Nehru in terms of its emphasis on poverty and unemployment amongst the agrarian and working classes as well as a reference to the Karachi Fundamental Rights resolution it did not mention the word socialism anywhere.[327]

Re-elected as Congress President at the Faizpur Congress of 1936/37, Nehru spoke of a 'revolutionary remedy: the socialist structure of society' to combat the problems of imperialism and to understand the 'real content of the swaraj to come'.[328] Although Nehru made a reference to a 'Backward Russia (which) with one mighty jump established a Soviet Socialist State and an economic order which has resulted in tremendous progress in all directions',[329], there was no further clarification in his presidential address about what he meant by socialism, how it would come about and, with what implications. All in all there seems to have been a considerable toning down of Nehru's radical rhetoric. Nor were any major resolutions on foreign policy or economic concerns passed in 1936 /37 which could have reflected Nehru's influence and engagement. This was a contrast compared with the previous Lucknow Congress where Nehru's presence had been much more evident. It is also noteworthy that during the controversy over the Presidency in 1939 when Subhas Chandra Bose was nominated for re-election (see above), Nehru was careful not to publicly take sides. Whilst Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad made public statements expressing their disapproval of Bose's candidature, Nehru was visibly silent.[330]

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[327] Ibid., pp. 134 - 140.
[328] Ibid. p. 188.
[329] Ibid., p. 192.
[330] See the various statements issued in Zaidi, A. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*; (Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1980) Volume 12, pp.122 – 144.

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The 1951 New Delhi session is interesting for the moderate tone adopted by Nehru on all the core issues raised in the Presidential address. With the country's first general elections approaching it seems logical that he felt the need to cast as broad an appeal as possible within the party and across the country. In fact a rather non-committal approach and lack of substantive pledges was evident in the Congress Election Manifesto adopted by the All India Congress Committee in July 1951.[331] Nehru's speech to the Congress session reflected this. On foreign policy, there was no mention of non-alignment, simply that 'we have a definite and positive approach to world problems'.[332] Similarly, the issue of the Hindu Code Bill was referred to but carefully sidestepped: 'the Hindu Code Bill, which has given rise to so many arguments, became a symbol of this conflict between progress and reaction in the social domain. I do not refer to any particular clause of that Bill, which might or might not be changed, but rather to the spirit underlying that Bill.'[333] With regards to Planning, it is significant that no mention was made of Socialism. Instead the Five Year Plan was simply portrayed as, 'a realistic survey of what it is possible to do with the resources likely to be available within the limitations of our Constitution and without a marked break from our existing social and economic framework'.[334]

Following its electoral success, the Congress party found itself in government at the centre and in most of the states. However, as is reflected in the two following Congress sessions, it was as if the party was being made to take a clear back seat in the formulation of policy. Elected yet again as President to both the 1953 and 1954 sessions, Nehru's Presidential speeches are cautious and aimed at maintaining a consensus. No landmark

[331] See Zaidi, A. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*; (Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1980) Volume 14, pp. 241 – 255.
[332] Ibid. p. 34.
[333] Ibid. p. 35.
[334] Ibid. p. 36.

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resolutions were adopted and little was revealed about the party's concrete plan for action.[335] As will be demonstrated further on in this chapter, this reflected a struggle that was going on at the time between the Congress in its organisational capacity and Congress as the party in government. Only in 1955 was Nehru sufficiently in command to relinquish the position and to allow someone else to become Congress President. It was also at the 1955 Avadi session that most of Nehru's policies were explicitly articulated and adopted by the Congress. A survey of the resolutions adopted by the 1955 Indian National Congress proves this point nicely. The resolution on a 'Socialistic Pattern of Society' declared the official goal of planning to be, 'where the principal means of production are under social ownership or control, production is progressively speeded up and there is equitable distribution of the national wealth'.[336] On international affairs, the principles which ought to govern relations with the countries of the world were officially proclaimed to be those 'set out in the joint statements issued by India, China and Burma, and more recently by India and Yugoslavia.' Furthermore, 'the Congress warmly welcom(ed) these five principles of PanchShila. They represent the approach and policy of India in international affairs, and put forward the alternatives of collective peace to the preparation for collective war'.[337] Finally, on the front of social reform the Hindu Code Bills were hailed as significant steps towards improving 'the welfare of women and children'.[338]

In each of the three areas Nehru's 'pet projects', as they had evolved over the first eight years of independence, were finally officially endorsed by the Congress party. This

[335] See Zaidi, A. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*; (Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1980) Volume 14, Book Three on the 1953 Hyderabad Session and Book Four on the 1954 Calcutta Session.
[336] Zaidi, A. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*; (Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1980) Volume 15, p. 52.
[337] Ibid. p. 54.
[338] Ibid. p. 62.

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came about as a result of unforeseeable events (such as the death of Sardar Patel in 1950) but was also due to the strategic and careful consolidation of power by Nehru within the party.

4.4. Nehru's Contemporaries

Three central figures are chosen as representative of views that could be described as having been to the left and right of Nehru. Rajendra Prasad, a veteran freedom fighter went on to become the first President of the independent Republic of India and whose position on particular issues such as partition, Hindu-Muslim relations, consolidation of the nation, economic policy, relations with the industrialists, were popular amongst the more conservative wing of the Congress party which included other key political figures such as Vallabhbhai Patel.[339] To represent the other end of the spectrum is Subhas Chandra Bose. The parallel drawn between Bose and Nehru is interesting given that they shared a tendency towards radical thinking particularly in the realm of economic policy but Nehru proved to be the cannier tactician, willing to temper his radicalism in order to consolidate his position within the Congress party first.

To highlight the span of differences between the three contemporaries and Nehru the table below juxtaposes the positions of each in the three main policy fields of economic development, social reform and foreign policy. Each of the above served as Congress President during the 1930s and hence their presidential addresses were used to extract the broad contours of their positions. The 1930s was a period when Gandhi more or less reigned

[339] Indian barrister and statesman and one of the senior leaders of the INC during the freedom struggle. During the first three years after independence in 1947 he served as deputy prime minister, minister of home affairs, minister of information and minister of states till his death in 1950.

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supreme as the maker and breaker of political destinies within the Congress party and the position of Congress president was a highly prestigious one as it carried with it the support and favour of the Mahatma. Hence, although the four figures were not in direct competition against one other they each nevertheless came to occupy a distinct place within the space of political agenda-making.

Table 4: Nehru and his contemporaries [340]

Leaders	Issues		
	Economic Development	**Social Reform**	**India & the World**
PATEL 1931 Congress President	'Whatever we produce in our country we must encourage to the exclusion of foreign...This is the condition of national growth. Thus we must encourage and carry on intensive propaganda on behalf of indigenous companies, banking, shipping and the like.' (p.140)	'removing untouch-ability... no Swaraj would be worth having without this supreme act of self-purification'. (p142)	'it is a fact beyond challenge that India has given a singular proof to the world that mass non-violence is no longer the idle dream of a visionary or a mere human longing... Looked at in the light of non-violence our struggle is a world struggle'. (p.133)
PRASAD 1934 Congress President	'I was told that the cost of transporting coal from South Africa to Indian cotton mills was the same as that of transporting it from the coalfields of Bihar to the same mills. I am mentioning these few illustrations and they can be multiplied to show how in the past the whole policy of	'To my mind Truth, Non-violence and Khadi represent a triple force whereby we can achieve the whole of the Karachi Programme and more' (p.382)	'Independence is the natural outcome of all that the freedom movement in India has stood for. It cannot mean isolation... It contemplates a free and friendly association with other nations for

[340] All the below quotes are drawn from the relevant volumes of Zaidi, A.M. et al (eds.) *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*. (S. Chand & Co. New Delhi, 1980).

www.historymarg.com

	the Government of India has been regulated with an eye no to the benefit of Indians but of foreigners' (p.374)		the mutual benefit of all'. (p.384)
NEHRU 1936 Congress President	'I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism.' (p.95) - the ending of private property except in a restricted sense - the ideal of cooperative service - rapid industrialisation	'the *Harijans* have constituted the landless proletariat and an economic solution removes the social barriers that custom and tradition have raised.' (p.97)	'we cannot isolate India or the Indian problem from that of the rest of the world' (p.85) - the freedom struggle is part of the post-WW1 global struggle for social freedom
BOSE 1938 & 39 Congress President	'I have no doubt that our chief national problems relating to the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease and to scientific production and distribution can be effectively tackled only along socialist lines' (p407) - reform of land-system, abolition of landlordism - liquidation of agricultural indebtedness - improvement of agricultural yield. - industrial development under state-ownership, state-control - Planning Commission for comprehensive scheme	'A policy of live and let live in matters religious.....should be our objective.... – a policy of complete non-interference in matters of conscience, religion and culture as well as of cultural autonomy for the different linguistic areas.' (p.404-5)	'We should not be influenced by the internal politics of any country or form of its state....We should aim at developing a nucleus of men and women in every country who would feel sympathetic towards India....through the foreign press, through Indian made films, through art exhibitions...' (p. 420)

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As the brief overview indicates the four leaders varied greatly in terms of methods espoused, general outlook and the particular objectives voiced. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, known for his good relations with the business community and pragmatic attitude, already in 1931 was calling for moves to stimulate and support local enterprise. Unlike Nehru, who in 1936, foretold the end of private property, Patel saw the need to make use of what was available before inflicting unnecessary destruction simply to make way for something new and bigger. On issues relating to social reform Patel's presidential speech had little to say except for the statement relating the abolition of untouchability to an act of self-purification. Much more strongly imbued with the language and practices of Gandhi than Nehru was, Patel also adhered more to the idea that the individual can, through his actions cleanse society of certain evils. This differed from Nehru's rather top-down approach where state-driven programmes changing the economy or issuing sweeping legislation would secularise society. Both Prasad and Patel saw India's use of non-violence as a contribution to humanity and possibly to the conduct of international politics.

Prasad comes across as more 'traditionalist', firmly embedded in the ideals and methods advocated by Gandhi, committed to the notion of truth and non-violence as essential guiding principles. Patel, on the other hand, while similarly well-versed in Gandhian thought, envisioned the need for arrangements that would provide material benefits to various parties at the same time, such as the federal system. While Nehru and Bose occupied the left end of the political spectrum, clear differences are also evident between the two. Both had a focus on economic problems and solutions, reflecting a shared belief in the benefits of a planned economy and rapid industrialisation. However, on the issue of social reform and India's international profile it is interesting to note a crucial divergence. Nehru, especially in the 1930s, tended to cast his worldview, his analysis of India's problems as well as his agenda for

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reform all in terms of socialism. Bose, on the other hand, comes across as more multi-faceted given that his view on cultural, identity-related issues proposed they be left out of the ambit of state-induced reform. With regards India's reputation and interests in the international arena, Bose anticipated non-alignment as a strategy with his advice that India ought to judge according to her interests rather than primarily following principles. This, in conjunction with the proposal that India should not simply rely upon a bestowed image but ought instead to carefully manufacture one, imply an unexpected closeness between Patel and Bose in their pragmatic, matter-of-fact diagnoses. Nehru and Prasad on the other hand seem closer in their more strictly doctrinaire approaches. Having briefly surveyed the scope for differences in the ideas and prognoses that were 'on offer' in the 1930s the following section looks more closely at the individuals.

4.4.1. Nehru's Contemporaries: Rajendra Prasad

Born in 1884 in Bihar, Rajendra Prasad was trained as a lawyer when in 1911 he joined the Congress party and was elected to the All India Congress Committee. Having set up a legal practice in Calcutta, Prasad became a known figure in the Eastern provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Unlike Jawaharlal Nehru, Prasad entered the freedom struggle through his experience of grassroots activism in the form of the *Champaran* movement. One of the first movements initiated by Gandhi, the Champaran agitation of 1918-1919 highlighted the dire conditions of the indigo workers in Bihar. Prasad's book on *Satyagraha*

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in Champaran[341] provides an insight into these early experiences and together with a book on partition, *India Divided*[342], there are contrasts with Nehru which can be drawn.

Written shortly after his experience of the Champaran *satygarha* Prasad described the long history of peasant struggles in the area, stating that the first recorded outbreak against the cultivation of indigo occurred in 1867.[343] Prasad's experiences and study of the peasant movement contrast starkly with Nehru's amazement and shock when he first encountered the plight and resilience of the *kisans* (farmers) in 1920 in the province of Uttar Pradesh. In his *Autobiography* for instance Nehru described how he was 'thrown almost without any will of my own, into contact, with the peasantry.....I realised more than ever how cut off we were from our people and how we lived and worked and agitated in a little world apart from them.....This realisation came to me during these Partabargh visits and ever since then my mental picture of India always contains this naked, hungry mass'. [344]

With regards to basic political, philosophical outlook, Rajendra Prasad seems to have been primarily concerned with the *means* of political action and in the second place, with the *goals*. This reflects a position that was closer to Mahatma Gandhi's thinking and approach which emphasised that the nature of action ultimately affected the aims too. Writing in 1919 when Gandhi had assumed national leadership in the movement against the Rowlatt Bills, *Satyagraha*, was defined as, 'insistence on truth, and force derivable from such insistence'[345] was a crucial mechanism of the movement which was as important as the goal of liberation

[341] Prasad, R. *Satyagraha in Champaran* (Ganesan, Madras, 1928).
[342] Prasad, R. *India Divided* (Hind Kitab, Bombay, 1947).
[343] Prasad, *Satyagraha in Champaran* (Madras, Ganesan, 1928), p. 28.
[344] Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London, J. Capec, 1936), pp. 54 - 55, p. 57.
[345] In a series of 'Satyagraha Leaflets', together with speeches and public statements, Gandhi sought to spread the meaning of satyagraha as a weapon of moral force. See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, (The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1965), Vol. XV, p. 249.

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itself. Hence, the need for regular self-purification and the conscious implementation of the 'truth force' which was to act as the 'binding force between province and province and the millions of Hindustan.'[346] As a result, in 1922 Gandhi was willing to suspend non-cooperation and to risk jeopardising the movement due to the violence that had taken place at Chauri Chaura which was a demonstration for him that the movement was not yet ready.[347]

Prasad, who from the beginning had claimed an affinity with Gandhi's ideas and methods unlike Nehru, who was more sceptical to begin with, echoes this prioritisation. For example in his presidential address to the 1934 session of the INC he said, 'To my mind Truth, Non-Violence and Khadi represent a triple force whereby we can achieve the whole of the Karachi programme[348] and more.....Whilst I would have no objection to amplifying the Karachi programme and elucidating it...I would say emphatically that we should do nothing that compromises by one iota the creed of non-violence.'[349] Whereas Nehru, who had been one of the key figures behind the Karachi Resolution, invested in the ideals and long-run goals of the movement, Prasad remained firmly committed to Gandhi's focus on the means and methods of the struggle.

A further difference compared with Jawaharlal Nehru's politics can be seen in Prasad's critique of the kind of radicalism for which Nehru stood: 'My friends the socialists, are keen on a more inspiring ideology and would hasten the elimination of all that stands for exploitation. I should like to tell them in all humility that there is no greater ideology than is expressed by the creed of truth and non-violence and the determination of the country not to

[346] Ibid.

[347] A major outbreak of violence when, a crowd of villagers set a police station afire in Chauri Chaura in UP, burning alive the twenty-two policemen inside.

[348]Principles laid down in the Karachi Resolution by the AICC at Bombay in August 1931 which came to be also known as the Fundamental Rights resolution.

[349] Zaidi, A.M. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress* (Chand & Co., Delhi, 1980), p. 382.

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eliminate the men that stand for exploitation but the forces that do so. Our quarrel is with the sin and not the sinner which we all are to a greater or lesser degree.'[350]

Another interesting difference in approach is evident in Prasad's world view. Commenting on Nehru's presidency of the Congress party in 1935 Prasad wrote that: 'An atmosphere of war was fast developing in Europe. Italy had invaded Ethiopia. England did not approve of Italy's action but avoided a direct clash with Italy on the issue. All that the League of Nations did was to express lip sympathy for Ethiopia.....Our socialist colleagues wanted the Congress to adopt a resolution sympathising with Ethiopia and refusing India's help to Britain in any future war because of her attitude to the victim of aggression...although nothing was father from my mind than that we should help Britain in case of war, I thought it premature for the Congress to express an opinion on international affairs'.[351] Unlike Nehru, Prasad did not believe in the need to be internationalist for the sake of being internationalist. Without having the means to actually implement the action and standards one preached, there was a danger of turning such statements into empty words and, in the process, losing credibility and influence in the future.

On economic policy there is a revealing difference in the way both Nehru and Prasad argued about the cow and its dual importance as a symbol of Hindu sentiments and as an economic unit of value. Brought to the fore in 1955 when The Indian Cattle Preservation Bill was placed before the Indian Parliament seeking a ban on cow slaughter, Nehru's position was to depict the cow only in terms of an economic unit and as part of the wider debate on agriculture and economic development. Nehru rejected the Bill on procedural grounds, arguing that as agricultural subject it fell under the jurisdiction of state legislatures. Rajendra

[350] Ibid., p. 382.
[351] Prasad, R. *Autobiography* (1957, National Book Trust, India), p. 419.

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Prasad on the other hand examined the issue of cow slaughter from a perspective that *combined* the two dimensions of identity and economic value. Hence, in his opinion legislation was not needed. Instead what was required was an improvement in the conditions of keeping and breeding of cows: 'If goshalas (sheds and facilities which could be provided by the government) are managed properly, cows will become a paying proposition and their slaughter will cease automatically'.[352] Unlike Nehru who chose to skirt the debate and to turn it into a discussion about the secular state, Prasad's proposition rested upon providing an economic solution to a socio-cultural problem by pinpointing its economic, and hence negotiable, roots. While Nehru, invested hope and faith in the ability of the state to mould its citizens, Prasad's approach drew upon the inherent basic instincts of the individual to secure the best possible conditions given his constraints. Hence, instead of proposing policies that entailed the State imposing its interpretation of modernity, top-down, Prasad's approach favoured the creation of incentives for people to behave in a way that was considered by them to be the more efficient and rational choice.

Accompanying this divergence in premises is the very different style adopted in his writing. Each of Nehru's main books examined here, *An Autobiography, Glimpses of World History* and *Discovery of India* are written in a very narrative and pedagogical manner whilst Prasad's texts read more like an analytical treatise. For example in a book outlining the grounds for partition, Prasad lays out his argument in a scientific manner. Beginning with the problem of how to identify the overlapping contours between State and Nationality, he concluded that 'a State need not be coterminous with a nationality, that in fact the experience of national States has ended in failure and created new problems'[353], Prasad goes on to prove that the Muslims do not constitute a nation and do not need a separate State given that there is

[352] Ibid. pp. 779 – 80.
[353] Prasad, *India Divided* (Hind Kitab Ltd. Bombay, 1946), p. 11.

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much that is shared, such as customs, rites, dress codes and sources of inspiration, which have created syncretic blends of language and art and which, most importantly, have a given rise to a shared history.

Moving on to analyse the role of the British in fanning communal consciousness, Prasad ends with a clever image from geometry: 'In this race between Muslim League demands and British Government concessions, the League is always ahead of the British Government by a few lengths and the Hindu majority and all other minorities cannot have even an entry. No wonder the base of the Communal triangle lengthens and the angle of communal difference widens.'[354] Prasad's analysis leads from one fact and inference to another and he even details various alternate schemes providing for complete independence versus the reorganisation of the provinces along cultural principles.[355] His final conclusion is insightful and remains prescient today: 'It will be a stupendous task to carry out a division of all this.....It may well be that when the actual division has been accomplished, the result may turn out to be a veritable Dead Sea Apple or a *Delhi ka Laddu*, which the man who gets it regrets as much as the man who does not.'[356]

4.4.2 Nehru's Contemporaries: Subhas Chandra Bose

As one of Jawaharlal Nehru's closest contemporaries Subhas Chandra Bose is invaluable as a basis for comparison particularly with regards Nehru's socialism and radicalism. Bose was a popular student leader and active in the trade union movement. A few

[354] Ibid., pp. 170 – 1.
[355] Ibid. See pp. 176 – 207.
[356] Ibid. p. 400.

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key publications and various published documents provide an insight into Bose's world view and belief system such as his unfinished autobiography, *An Indian Pilgrim*[357] and historical work, *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942*[358] which provide an interesting contrast to Nehru's *Autobiography* and *Discovery of India* in terms of how Bose purviews his life within the larger context of India's colonial history.

For example, on the matter of religion Bose's writing implies that he was much more comfortable with the particular mix of spirituality and politics that India's historical experience had generated than Nehru ever was. Surveying the Bengal Renaissance and the figures it produced, Bose described a continuing trend where spirituality became wedded to politics through Ram Mohan Roy, Sasadhar Tarkachuramani, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo and affected other leaders across the country like B.G.Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi.[359] Experimenting personally with yoga and immersing himself in Indian philosophy[360], Bose's adolescent and young adult experiences and inclinations are a marked contrast to the preferences for Western sources of thought and action that Nehru pursued from an early stage. Though spending eighteen months at Cambridge, Subhas Bose retained a strong nationalist streak and tendency towards extremist politics, ultimately resigning from his Indian Civil Service position to join the freedom struggle. By their late twenties both Jawaharlal and Bose were 'the heroes of India's youth and the bêtes noires of the British authorities.[361]

[357] Bose, S. C. *An Indian Pilgrim. An unfinished autobiography.*(Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998)
[358] Bose, S.C. *The Indian Struggle, 1920 – 1942* reproduced as *Netaji Collected Works*, Volume 2 (Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta, 1981).
[359] *Netaji Collected Works*, Volume 1 (Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta, 1980), p. 18.
[360] Ibid. See chapter VI.
[361] Nanda, B.S. *Jawaharlal Nehru* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1995), p. 66.

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Interestingly while the two shared an affinity for radical politics what ultimately divided them was their response and strategy towards Gandhi's personality and politics. While Jawaharlal was to move closer and closer to Gandhi, Bose remained loyal to C.R.Das, his mentor, a major Bengali leader in the independence movement who, in the 1920s, had been one of the sharpest critics of Gandhi's methods of non-cooperation. Bose therefore, as a protégé of C.R.Das, was more willing to openly express his scepticism about Gandhi's political wisdom and style while Nehru, who had decided quite early on to cast his lot with Gandhi, opted not to confront him publicly on issues of disagreement and more often than not, to do as he was bid. An early indication of this parting of their ways came in 1928. In response to pressure from within the Congress Party (led by Motilal Nehru) to accept Dominion Status as the party's objective, Bose and Nehru formed the 'Independence for India League' to propagate the goal of *complete* independence. On the eve of the Calcutta Congress, Gandhi negotiated a via media, proposing that Congress formally adopt the proposition of Dominion Status but that if this were not accepted by the British government within one year, the Congress would opt for complete independence and engage in civil disobedience. Bose who opposed the resolution, saw it as 'shirking the duty of launching a struggle against the British imperialists'[362] while Nehru, chose to support the resolution, probably in the realisation that it heralded the return of Gandhi as central power broker and in the knowledge that the one year ultimatum to the British was unlikely to yield anything.

Jawaharlal's election as INC president the following year at the Lahore Congress added to the gulf that had been created by the above incident. This was seen by Bose as a stratagem by Gandhi to draw Nehru away from the left wing of the Congress.[363] Discovering that he was not included in the newly formed Working Committee, Bose decided to walk out

[362] Bose, S. (ed.) *Netaji Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 175.
[363] Ibid. p. 188.

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(see page 153 for a discussion of INC organisation), accusing Jawaharlal of having sold out to the 'Dominion Status school'. Once again, at the 1931 Karachi Congress, Bose was critical of Gandhi regarding the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the Round Table Conference. In 1935, Bose's *The Indian Struggle*, was published in which he acknowledged that Gandhi had transformed the INC from 'a talking body into a live and fighting organisation' but he was also highly critical: "The asceticism of Gandhiji, his simple life, his vegetarian diet, his adherence to truth and his consequent fearlessness – all combined to give him a halo of saintliness.....Consciously or unconsciously, the Mahatma fully exploited the mass psychology of the people, just as Lenin did the same thing in Russia, Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany."[364] Bose deplored the religious and moral undertones of satyagraha and the campaign against untouchability which he felt distracted from the main political objectives. These were opinions which were very close to Jawaharlal's impressions at the time. However, although the two may have shared the desire to turn Congress towards a more progressive direction, Jawaharlal had realised at the 1936 Congress over which he presided, that Socialism threatened to divide the party more than unite it. Socialist slogans of class struggle, it was argued by the more conservative wing, did not help the Congress-led movement which was aimed at freedom first and then socio-economic reform but in fact hindered it by helping the government gain the support of landlords and feudal elements.

Arrested upon his return to India, Bose was in prison for almost one year and in a gesture both to Bose and to Bengal, Gandhi supported Bose's candidature for INC president in 1938. At the 1938 Haripura Session of the INC, Bose's presidential address provides an insight into his outlook and approach to politics. One of Nehru's specialities was an internationalism which manifested itself in the emphasis he gave to international problems

[364] Bose, S. *Netaji Collected Works*, Volume 2 (Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta, 1980), p. 125 – 6.

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and the need for India to be an active participant in the international arena, albeit more in terms of rhetoric than concrete action. Bose, seems to be as, if not more, internationalist than Nehru in terms of the broad historical contexts he was able to give his speeches and the radical commitments made to internationalist agendas. For example the struggle for political freedom of India was portrayed as incidentally also the fight 'for the economic emancipation of the British people as well.'[365] Analysing the ebb and flow of past Empires, Bose's speech had a clear historical and structural argument in which he analysed the inherent weaknesses and contradictions of the British Empire and the challenges of attaining and preserving India's unity. Referring directly to future policy, Bose took a clear stand on the problems of accommodating differences within a framework of equal rights and obligations. Hence, on the issue of religion he emphasized that 'the Congress policy is one of live and let live – a policy of complete non-interference in matters of conscience, religion and culture, as well as of cultural autonomy for the different linguistic areas.'[366]

Unlike Nehru's speeches as Congress party president, Bose dwelt upon a number of looming practical challenges such as how to ensure the continued vitality of the Congress party when, after winning freedom, it would also became the party to put into effect the entire programme of post-war reconstruction. Other problems he considered included generating national unity through mechanisms like a lingua franca and a common script; reforming and modernising agricultural production as well as industrial development; changing the outlook of the permanent services like the bureaucracy to instil a national outlook and mentality. On the matter of foreign policy Bose also had a distinctive brand of pragmatism: 'we should take a leaf out of Soviet diplomacy. Though Soviet Russia is a Communist State her diplomats

[365] Bose, 1938 Presidential Speech in Ayer, S.A. *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose* (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1983), p. 68.
[366] Ibid. p. 73.

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have not hesitated to make alliances with non-socialist States and have not declined sympathy or support coming from any quarter. We should therefore aim at developing a nucleus of men and women in every country who would feel sympathetic towards India.'[367]

The case of Subhas Chandra Bose is also interesting in terms of the difference in strategy pursued by him. Unlike Nehru who was careful to restrain and temper his beliefs and actions in order to maintain a consensus and avoid crises, Bose was willing to openly challenge even the Mahatma himself. Standing for re-election as Congress president in 1939, against the express wishes of Gandhi and, on top of that, winning the elections, Bose brought the rift within the Congress movement between right and left to the fore. Most of the members of the Congress Working Committee resigned and Nehru, despite sharing the ideological underpinnings of economic policy with Bose, chose not to publicly support him.

As Bose himself described it, Nehru typically opted for an ambiguous stance: 'The election was followed by sensational developments, culminating in the resignation of twelve out of the fifteen members of the Working Committee, headed by Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad and Mr. Rajendra Prasad. Another distinguished and eminent member of the Working Committee, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, though he did not formally resign, issued a statement which led everybody to believe that he had also resigned.'[368] After failed attempts to form a consensus cabinet, none of which Gandhi agreed to endorse, Bose finally decided to quit in May 1939.

Although remaining a member of the INC, Bose attempted to rally leftist forces under the umbrella of a Forward Bloc within the Congress party which basically advocated two key

[367] Ibid. p. 85.

[368] Bose, 1939 Presidential Speech in Ayer, S.A. *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose* (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1983), p. 94.

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positions: issuing an ultimatum for self-government to the British and, establishing Socialism as the political creed for independent India. In addition, at the following Congress session in March 1940, Bose convened an alternative ‘Anti-Compromise Conference’ close to the official site. Lambasting an All India Congress Committee resolution to curb the power of the provincial Congress committees, Bose refused to hold elections to the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, of which he was president and in response, the Congress Working Committee decided to disqualify him from holding any elective office for a period of three years. In July 1940 Bose was arrested and detained by the Government under the Defence of India Act but released in early December on medical grounds. He successfully escaped from house arrest in January 1941 and set off to Germany and Japan to seek help from the Axis powers in liberating India from British rule.

A deeper insight into Bose’s political thinking is provided by a lengthy document titled ‘Forward Bloc: Its Justification’ dated 22 March, 1941 which came to be known as the *Kabul Thesis* since it was written in Kabul, where Bose was secretly in transit, having escaped house arrest in Calcutta and ultimately reaching Berlin via Moscow. In this document he used Hegelian dialectics to demonstrate the emergence of a ‘Leftist Antithesis’ in response to a ‘Rightist Thesis’ and to argue how his initiative of the Forward Bloc would act as a rejuvenating force. Hence the Forward Bloc had ‘saved the Congress from stagnation and death at the hands of the Rightists...It has served to stem the drift towards Constitutionalism, to create a new revolutionary mentality among the people and to bring the Congress back to the path of struggle....(it) has clarified the issues which separate the Left from the Right and has stimulated the intellectual and ideological progress of the

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Congress'.[369] To Bose, Leftism meant in the first place anti-imperialism and only after the attainment of independence, would it be equated with Socialism. Unlike Nehru who already in his pre-independence days spoke of the need for a socialist outlook and socialist policies, Bose was in some ways more pragmatic when asserting that 'Socialism or Socialist reconstruction before achieving our political emancipation is altogether premature'.[370]

Ultimately sidelined within the Congress party, Bose's strategy was not an effective one as he ended up isolating himself amongst the High Command which, apart from Mahatma Gandhi, included others like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, J.B.Kripalani, Bhulabhai Desai, Sarojini Naidu. Nevertheless, Bose played a central role in terms of articulating the Leftist position and in paving some of the ground so that Nehru's visions could later take root. The most obvious evidence of this lies in the formation of the Planning Commission which was installed under the leadership of Bose.

During the early 1930s Bose's relations with Nehru were good enough for him to ask Nehru to become the first chairman of the newly initiated Planning Commission. However, after the 1939 re-election fiasco, Bose's comments on Nehru are deeply bitter. His sense of betrayal and disappointment is palpable in a letter to Nehru dated March 28, 1939 in which he outlined various grievances and highlighted the differences between them: 'You are in the habit of proclaiming that you stand by yourself and represent nobody else and that you are not attached to any party.....By bearing a non-party label one can be popular with all parties, but what is the value of it?'[371] Another difference in approach is revealed in Bose's

[369] Bose, 'Forward Bloc: Its Justification', 1941 reproduced in Bose, S.K. and Bose, S. *Azad Hind. Subhas Chandra Bose.* (Anthem Press, 2004, London), p. 29.
[370] Ibid. p. 26.
[371] Bose, in Ratnakar, L. *Nehru. A Critical Assessment by Subhas Chandra Bose and Rammanohar Lohia* (Hope India, Gurgaon, 2003), p. 33.

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criticism of Nehru's statements on international affairs: 'I feel that we should take international politics seriously and utilise the international situation for our benefit – nor not talk about it at all. It is no use making a show, if we do not mean business.'[372]

By 1941 Subhas Chandra Bose was out of the country and increasingly out of the picture in terms of Congress politics. It is alleged that he died in a plane accident on 18 August, 1945 although his body was never recovered. His death in removed a potential rival to Nehru from the political scene and in effect, Bose's vision of India's economic development strategy was absorbed into Nehru's programme.

4.4.3. Nehru's Contemporaries: Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Born, it is estimated in 1875, into a formerly important clan in the princely state of Gujarat, Vallabhbhai Patel was brought up adhering to religious beliefs as a way of life and in a family with limited resources. Unlike both Nehru and Bose, Patel's education began through a village school from which he worked his way up to complete his studies in law. Setting up his own practice in Godra in 1900 Patel self-financed his training as a barrister in London in 1910 and returned to India in 1913. Patel's youth seems to have been spent mostly on acquiring an education and setting up his legal practice in order to support his own and his brothers' families. Brought into close contact with Gandhi in 1917 when Patel was elected as Secretary to the Gujarat Sabha[373] and Gandhi was invited to be its President, his career in politics was launched. Together with Gandhi, Patel fought for the rights of farmers to be

[372] Ibid. p.43.

[373] A public political organisation which merged into the Indian National Congress to become the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee in 1920.

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exempted from payment of land tax when the yield was less than 25 per cent of the normal, organising a campaign of non-violent resistance by the peasants which was ultimately successful. An older man when he came into contact with Gandhi and joined forces with him, Patel was a solid supporter and unquestioning follower; a different generation compared to the spirited, idealistic young men that Nehru and Bose were when they joined the nationalist movement.

With Gandhi sentenced to six years imprisonment in 1922, Patel was looked upon as the leader of the Congress movement in Gujarat and in 1928 with the campaign in Bardoli, Patel acquired the status of a hero. Challenging once again the British policy of land taxation, in 1928 a tax increase of 22 per cent was announced, Patel launched a non-violent, civil disobedience movement protesting the fact that peasants had to pay periodically increasing taxes regardless of the size of their land-holdings and the yield produced. Appealing to all sections of society, Vallabhbhai managed to put together a united front of Muslims and Hindus to fight the Government. After a long campaign an independent enquiry was launched into whether the land revenue increase had been justified. Concluding that an increase of 5.7 per cent was reasonable as against the 22 per cent sanctioned by the Government, the Bardoli settlement was hailed a triumph for *satyagraha*. Catapulted into the limelight of Congress politics as a result of the peasant campaign, Patel was elected Congress President in 1931, but only after Jawaharlal Nehru had served in 1929 when, at the behest of his father, Motilal Nehru to Gandhi, Jawaharlal's name was proposed.

The differences in style and substance between Jawaharlal and Patel were evident from early on. Unlike Nehru, who went through a long period of questioning the effectiveness of Gandhi's techniques and had trouble with the religiosity that Gandhi

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represented, Patel, despite his lawyer's conviction for negotiated agreements and the rule of law, was more easily able to engage with and implement Gandhi's principles and methods of action. Perhaps this was a result of his upbringing which was closer to Gandhi's than Jawaharlal's had been or perhaps Patel's solid rootedness of being connected to the land and peasantry in Gujarat gave him a confidence and stability which the young Jawaharlal lacked and which compelled him to seek structural solutions and explanations in doctrines and ideologies. In the mid-1930s although Jawaharlal propounded socialist ideas and had the support of the Congress socialists it was Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Patel who held the upper hand in determining the content of Congress resolutions and the membership of the Working Committee. Excerpts of Patel's statement in response to Jawaharlal's presidential speech of 1936 are worth reproducing to note the difference in tone and worldview:

'While I detest imperialism and admit the inequality between capitalist class and the famishing poor, I do believe that it is possible to purge capitalism of its hideousness.....There is no difficulty in my subscribing to the doctrine that all land and wealth belonged to all.....When we have attained (freedom) it will be time to enforce our theories and plans.' [374]

In 1947, at independence Jawaharlal Nehru was sworn in as Prime Minister on account of his election to President of Congress in 1946 although Patel had been the favoured candidate and only in acquiescence to Gandhi had withdrawn his candidature. Sharing power with Nehru as his Deputy Prime Minister, their divergent views on economic matters and others came to the fore. Additionally Home Minister and Minister for States and Information and Broadcasting and together with his control over the Congress Party machine, Patel maintained a formidable concentration of power in his hands. Decrying Prime Minister

[374] Quoted in Panjabi, K.L. *The Indomitable Sardar* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1990), p. 107.

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Nehru's tendency towards appeasement and idealism, Patel had the tendency to give voice to the concerns of the Hindu majority, calling for Muslims who had opted to stay on in India to demonstrate their loyalty by not demanding special treatment as minorities or by denouncing the acts of aggression committed by Pakistan in Kashmir. [375]

Differences between the two were also evident in the Constituent Assembly Debates where on the issue of property rights Patel was firmly in favour of securing their protection, allowing the State acquisition only for the sake of a public purpose and on payment of fair compensation. Nehru, who was concerned about implementing a socialistic programme and introducing a reform of the land tenure system pressed that the legislatures should have full powers, in the larger national interest, to decide the scale of compensation to be paid. Finally, in a victory for Patel over Nehru, the Constituent Assembly accepted that the right to property be protected by the Constitution and that the rate of compensation should be subject to review by the courts [376].

Combining a toughness and sense of pragmatism, Patel achieved other miracles of negotiation such as persuading minorities, including the Muslims, to give up the tradition of separate electorates introduced by the British, and the integration of the 554 princely states, which was achieved peacefully with the exception of Hyderabad and Kashmir (the latter being handled personally by Nehru). It is interesting to note that working closely with Patel were figures who in their own right were great public personalities such as Rajendra Prasad, who served as President of the Constituent Assembly and later as President of the nation, and V.P. Menon who acted as secretary to Patel in the States Department.

[375] Ibid., pp. 168 – 9.
[376] Added as Article 300 A .

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As has been pointed out by Patel's biographer, Patel was an adept party man, capable of managing the party machine so that important members of all different hues continued to support the Congress-led movement. Not so often at the forefront like Nehru and lacking his international exposure and persona, Patel had worked closely with Gandhi during the 1930s to manage the party organisation to the extent that he was one of the few leading figures to have widespread support and respect from across the country. As treasurer of the Congress he raised money, courting powerful industrialists and feudal landlords. Later, as President of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee Patel experienced firsthand the running of election campaigns and the enforcement of discipline in the Congress Ministries. As will be demonstrated in the following section Patel remained a formidable force and a power to reckon with until his death in 1950.

4.5. Consolidating Power: the struggle for dominance.

Having examined the structure of the Congress Party and the various contending figures and viewpoints, the chapter explores the processes through which Nehru consolidated his power within the party.

4.5.1. Nehru's position within the INC: 1947-1955.

Invited by the Viceroy of India, Lord Wavell, to form an interim government, Jawaharlal Nehru took the helm on 2 September 1946. It is interesting to note that this occurred manifestly because Nehru happened, at the time, to be the President of the Indian National Congress, a position he held largely thanks to Gandhi's powerful intervention in his

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favour for it appears that Congressmen in general favoured Sardar Patel for this office.[377] As a result, when independence came less than one year later, Nehru had precedence and it seemed automatic that he should become the first Prime Minister of sovereign, independent India. The leadership rivalry between Nehru and Patel, though not apparent on the outside, soon revealed itself in terms of their fundamentally opposing positions on various issues.

A description of the two by a contemporary, C.D.Deshmukh, who was to become Finance Minister in 1950, aptly captures the differences between the two, 'Temperamentally, Patel was a realist, with the common sense characteristic of the sturdy peasantry from Kaira District, Gujarat, from which stock he had sprung. Nehru on the other hand, was an intellectual with a theoretical commitment to socialism dating back to the days of his early manhood and traceable to his sojourns in Europe in the early nineteen-thirties. At the core of Vallabhbhai's realism was the recognition of the foibles of human nature and an awareness of its limitations, which stamped him as a conservative. Nehru, unsure as a judge of men, was inclined to overestimate the achievement potential of his fellow-beings; he was in consequence only too ready to respond to the appeal of socialism. The Nehru-Patel balance in the Cabinet was therefore a case of unstable equilibrium, maintained only by a common effort on either side not to encroach on each other's assigned territory'.[378]

The Congress presidential elections of 1950 proved to be one such point of contestation. Two candidates, J.B.Kripalani and Purushottamdas Tandon had the support of

[377] This is the opinion voiced by a number of contemporaries including: Abul Kalam Azad: *India Wins Freedom*, Calcutta 1959, p. 153, Michael Brecher: *Nehru: A Political Biography*, London, 1959, pp. 313-15, Punjabi, K.L.*The Indomitable Sardar*, Bombay, (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1962), p.133, Gadgil, N.V. *Government from Inside*, (Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut, 1968), p.11, Das, Durga : *India from Curzon to Nehru*, (Collins, London, 1969), pp. 229-30, Kripalani, J.B.: *Gandhi: His Life and Thought*, (Publications Division, Min. Of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1970), pp. 248 – 50.

[378] Deshmukh, C.D. *The Course of My Life*, (Orient Longman, Bombay, 1974), p. 205.

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Nehru and Patel respectively and their contest was watched as a trial of strength between the Prime Minister and his Deputy in the Cabinet. Furthermore, with the First General Elections impending, it was recognised that the party office bearers would play a decisive role in the selection of candidates for the elections. It is revealing that despite having experienced an acrimonious relationship with Kripalani in 1946-1947 when Kripalani was Congress President and Nehru, the interim Prime Minister, eventually leading to Kripalani's resignation in 1947[379], Nehru opted to support Kripalani over Tandon in the 1950 contest.

Nehru made it known that apart from supporting Kripalani, if Tandon were to be elected he would treat it as a vote of no-confidence against himself by the Congress party and would resign as prime minister. The election took place on 29 August 1950 and the result was announced on 1 September. Tandon secured a majority, with 1,306 votes, Kripalani having won 1,052 and Shankarrao Deo, 202. [380] In response to Tandon's election, Nehru decided to place before the 1950 Nasik session a series of resolutions to test whether the party was willing to endorse his policies and positions. These resolutions referred to foreign policy, particularly towards Pakistan, condemned communalism, reaffirmed the secular state concept, and approved the government's economic policy. All of them were passed by huge majorities. However, the unity which Nehru had hoped to test through these resolutions quickly revealed cracks when it came to discussing the composition of the party executive, the Working Committee. Despite an invitation from Tandon, Nehru refused at first to join the new Working Committee. Discussions over the members were brought to a temporary halt with only thirteen of twenty members selected. When the rest were announced on October 16, 1950 it was evident that Nehru had been unable to exert his preferences, for Tandon had

[379] See Chapter One: 'Transition: 1946-1951' in Kochanek, S.A. *The Congress Party of India. The Dynamics of One-Party Democracy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968).
[380] Zaidi, A. (ed.) *Report of the General Secretaries, 1949-50*, (All India Congress Committee, New Delhi), p. 83.

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dropped all those who had opposed him and created a committee containing eight Provincial Congress Presidents. This represented a break with the past when the Working Committee had been dominated by individuals who had a broad, all-India appeal as opposed to being provincial, party bosses.

On December 15, 1950 Sardar Vallabhhai Patel's death removed a formidable challenge to Nehru's leadership and the central bastion of the conservative wing of the Congress party. However, the next road block emerged in the form of a confrontation between Tandon and his Working Committee on the one hand against Kripalani and the Democratic Front, which he had formed following his failure to win the presidency. The objective of the Front was to 'purify' the Congress and, to carry out the central economic, social and foreign policies that had been articulated in the Nasik resolutions. With matters gradually coming to a head, Nehru eventually took action by writing to Tandon on August 6, 1951 stating his decision to resign from the Working Committee and the Congress Election Committee.[381] In the following week, Nehru addressed the Congress Parliamentary Party, explaining his reasons for his resignation.[382] A motion of confidence in Nehru's leadership was introduced and passed, implying that the conflict was about individuals, leadership and policy rather than a clash of roles and procedure.

Eventually Tandon stepped down and on September 8, 1951 Nehru was elected to the Congress presidency by a vote of 295 to 4. Appointing Tandon to his Working Committee Nehru invited all those who had seceded from the Congress to rejoin the party. Meeting in October, the Congress passed a series of resolutions embodying Nehru's policies on the

[381] Letter from Nehru to P.D.Tandon from Nehru, August 6, 1951 in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, Volume 16, Part II.
[382] Ibid. pp. 161 – 171.

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economy, communalism and foreign policy.[383] Although in late 1951 it already looked as though Nehru was the undisputed leader within the party, concrete actions had to be taken to sustain this position. As Congress President for the next three years, Nehru worked to consolidate and secure his power. Handing over the President-ship in 1954 to U.N.Dhebar, formerly Chief Minister of the State of Saurashtra and at forty-nine, a 'new generation' compared with earlier leaders, Nehru could be sure of his protégé's loyalty In one of his first public speeches Dhebar acknowledged the pre-eminence of Nehru in particular: 'There is only one leader in India today and that is Jawaharlal Nehru. Whether he carries the mantle of Congress Presidentship on his shoulders or not, ultimately, the whole country looks to him for support and guidance'.[384]

4.5.2. Nehru as political entrepreneur:

transforming the Congress-led movement into a political party.

Using the resources available to him, Nehru managed to secure his position. Two institutions provided the means through which to exert his influence and establish a power base: the Congress Working Committee (CWC) and the parliamentary Cabinet. The struggle to control the Congress Working Committee was an old one since, as a sub-committee of the A.I.C.C. it was the highest authority of the Congress and the chief policy-maker of the organisation. It framed the rules for the working of the organisation, controlled the Pradesh Congress Committees and took disciplinary action against committees or individuals within the Congress. Post-independence, the CWC was charged with coordinating party-government relations through the Parliamentary Board and through a second committee, the Central

[383] See Zaidi, A.M. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*, (Chand & Co., 1981), Volume 14 pp. 45 – 51.

[384] Kochanek, S.A. *The Congress Party of India. The Dynamics of One-Party Democracy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 61.

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Election Committee it exerted great influence in the selection of election candidates.[385] However, with independence the relationship between the Congress party and the central government became a central concern, raising questions about the extent to which the CWC ought to continue issuing all-India policies under a federal system, whether a membership criteria ought to be developed and the need to introduce fair organisational elections.

In the transformation from a mass movement into a political party in government, the composition of the CWC took on a greater importance. On the one hand, it was argued that close cooperation and overlapping membership of the CWC and government positions was necessary to preserve unity, but at the same time a majority seemed to believe that this represented too much of a concentration of power.[386] As mentioned above, Purshottamdas Tandon's CWC was composed largely of party bosses from the major states, many of whom opposed the social and economic policies of the Nehru government. Under Nehru the composition of the CWC underwent a significant alteration. At the 1951 A.I.C.C. session, in preparation for the General Elections, the Congress President was given full freedom to select his Working Committee, enabling Nehru to drawn upon Central Ministers and Chief Ministers. In this way, the Working Committee became a means of coordinating all-India Congress policy informally, ensuring that there was little divergence between party resolutions and government action. Nehru had also instituted a practice of writing regularly to his Chief Ministers and the letters demonstrate how closely he sought to guide and monitor their actions.[387]

[385] Ibid. p. 111.

[386] See the discussions over the Pant resolution September 1946 which proposed that 'no one will be debarred from the membership of the Working Committee or any other body of the Congress on account of his holding office in the Interim Government', Kochanek, S.A. *The Congress Party of India. The Dynamics of One-Party Democracy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968), Chapter 5.

[387] *Letters to Chief Ministers* (Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, New Delhi, 1985).

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By 1951 therefore Nehru was in a position to give institutional form to his vision and priorities for a modern, independent India. By strategically compromising on some issues, such as the degree of socialist rhetoric in order to secure a consensus on economic policy or, by encouraging a polemic debate on other fronts, as in the case of the Hindu Code bills, Nehru had managed to favourably alter the 'structure of opportunities' in his favour. By 1951 he combined the post of prime minister with that of Congress president and was able to exert his influence through both the working committee and, as we shall see below, the Cabinet. However, the extent to which Nehru was able in fact to shape the political arena and the limits to his power, will come through in the following three chapters when each of the individual policies are examined closely. As suggested in chapter one, the instrumentalisation of a policy issue, (an indicator of this being when the actor refers to a particular policy more in terms of its symbolism rather than its substantive content), is unlikely to generate uncontested policy outcomes. On the contrary, such a style of politics and policy-making is inherently more likely to run into strong opposition and stringent bargaining positions.

The changing composition of the Cabinet is yet another prism through which to follow the growing predominance of Nehru. According to the Constitution it was stated that 'there shall be a Council of Ministers, with the Prime Minister at the head, to aid and advise the President in the exercise of his functions....The Prime Minister shall be appointed by the President and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister'.[388] Thus, the Westminster British model of parliamentary Cabinet government was instituted and some of the unwritten conventions of the British system were written into the Indian constitution.

[388] Articles 74(1) and 75(1) of the Indian Constitution.

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The first Cabinet in fact predated the Indian Constitution. Following the acceptance by the Indian National Congress of the British Cabinet Mission Plan, the then Viceroy, Lord Wavell, invited Jawaharlal Nehru (in the latter's capacity as the then head of the Congress), to form an Interim Government. Nehru was to the Vice-President of the Viceroy's Executive Council under the proposed arrangement and all the Departments (including the previously reserved or British-controlled Departments of External Affairs, Defence, and Communications) were to be under the charge of Indian Members. Technically, the Viceroy remained the President of the Council but before forming the government, Nehru obtained the assurance from Lord Wavell that the Interim Government would, in practice, function like a Dominion Cabinet. In other words, the Interim Government was to act like a Cabinet and Nehru was the *de facto* Prime Minister. In reality, Nehru was not quite as free as the Prime Minister under a Cabinet system. The task of forming the Government was entrusted by the Congress to a special parliamentary committee comprising Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad and Rajendra Prasad, demonstrating who the helm-leaders were at the time. The Cabinet was also not characterised by political homogeneity with some of its Members (out of an initial team of nine) also *non*-Congressmen, namely C.H.Bhabha[389], John Matthai[390], Baldev Singh[391], and S.P.Mookerji.[392]

Jawaharlal Nehru's first cabinet after independence was sworn in on 15 August 1947 and consisted of a Deputy Prime Minister (Patel) and twelve other Ministers. Patel it is said was virtually self-appointed for, having withdrawn in favour of Nehru at Gandhi's insistence in the leadership contest of 1946, he expected his due. Also in the cabinet, Rajendra Prasad was one of the party stalwarts, leaning more towards the right. Three other members,

[389] Representative of industrialist community.
[390] A noted economist and business magnate.
[391] Indian Sikh political leader who became the country's first Defence Minister.
[392] Member of the Hindu Mahasabha.

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N.V.Gadgil, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Jairamdas Daulatram were not Nehru's own choices. Gadgil himself attributed his first appointment in 1947 and, retention in the first cabinet of 1950, to Sardar Patel. Both Amrit Kaur and Daulatram had not been in the forefront of all-India Congress leadership, but had been closely associated with Gandhi. Subsequent appointments of K.M.Munshi, R.R.Diwarkar and K.Santhanam were seen as falling under Patel's special area of influence, at the time, mainly Bombay and the South. Significantly, all of them were dropped after the general election of 1952, Patel having passed away in the meantime and Nehru being in a position of strength within the party. In addition to these, two other members of the Cabinet – Jagjivan Ram and C.H.Bhabha –owed their positions to factors other than the Prime Minister's personal choice. Jagjivan Ram was included to provide representation to the numerous hairjans or Scheduled Castes and C.H.Bhabha was included following a decision by the Congress High Command to give representation in the government to the affluent and influential Parsee community.[393]

The limits to Nehru's power during the early years of independence are evident from various aspects. Firstly, there was his inability to remove Patel despite Nehru's own threats to resign. N.V.Gadgil, a 'Patelite' also proved to be an obstacle to Nehru.[394] In the early years after independence Nehru also had to cope with some very vocal critics who were also Cabinet members. S.P.Mookerji for instance served as cabinet minister for Industry and Supply for two and a half years after which he resigned from the Cabinet on 19th April, 1950. He held strong views on the path to economic development given India's conditions. According to his biographer, Mookerji was convinced that in an industrially backward country, the primary task was to mobilise all resources, private and governmental to make the

[393] Azad, A.K. *India Wins Freedom*, (Orient Longman, Bombay, 1960) p. 163.
[394] See N.V.Gagdil, *Government from Inside* (Meerut, 1968) for examples of such instances.

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country self-sufficient, especially in terms of defence requirements.[395] Total nationalisation was unwise given the lack of trained personnel and expertise to run industries efficiently. Hence collaboration with private industry was essential. This view in addition to the strong stance he adopted with regards treating Pakistan as India's number one enemy brought him into conflict with Nehru on issues like how to handle the integration of Kashmir and Hyderabad into the Indian Union.

Following the death of Patel in December 1950 and the weakening of the 'Patelites' in the cabinet, Mookerji was approached to lead a new organisation, the All India Bharatiya Jana Sangh which was launched in late 1951. Explaining the need for the new party he said, "one of the chief reasons for the manifestation of dictatorship in Congress rule is the absence of well-organised opposition parties which alone can act as a healthy check on the majority party and can hold out before the country the prospect of an alternative government".[396]

It can be argued that Nehru as an uncontested leader really came into his own after the success of the 1952 elections. The election manifestos for the country's first general elections offer a useful insight into the political terrain of the time. Whilst the Indian National Congress held the clear advantage in terms of resources, a pan-India network and the undisputed association with the Freedom Struggle, a few other parties stood for clear alternatives to the Congress programme. The Hindu Mahasabha for example, apart from projecting itself as the party, that 'stands for establishment of a Hindu Raj in Bharat with a form of Government in accordance with Hindu conception of policy and economy'[397], and a key player in the Civil Resistance movement, differentiated itself from the Congress on

[395] Madhok, B. *Portrait of a Martyr.* (Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1969), p. 71.
[396] Ibid. p.107.
[397] *Election Manifesto of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha*, The Office Secretary, Hindu Mahasabha, New Delhi, 1951, p. 8.

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specific policy matters as well. Thus, in foreign policy the Hindu Mahasabha criticised 'the unrealistic and theoretical approach in the sphere of foreign policy (that) has left Bharat friendless in the whole world'[398], on the economy, 'the vacillating and indecisive policy of the Congress Government in dealing with industry has alienated successfully both capital and labour. It has created a sense of insecurity in the minds of investors and has retarded the growth of industry.'[399]

On the subject of social reform, the Hindu Mahasabha protested the 'attempt by the Congress Government to pass the Hindu Code Bill in spite of general protest against the disruption of Hindu society.'[400] The policy alternatives promised included, a 'foreign policy guided by the principle of enlightened self-interest and reciprocity'[401], recognition of 'the sanctity of private property and guarantee(ing) its possession and inheritance to its owners'[402], and a clear position 'against legislative interference in religious matters, measures like the Hindu Code Bill would be opposed'.[403] In all the three policy arenas therefore the Hindu Mahasabha took a clear stand.

The Jana Sangh, formed on the eve of the elections, decided to contest for seats in both the State and Central legislatures. Challenging the government on a number of issues, the Jana Sangh expressed alternative views on topics including the economy, foreign policy and communalism. On the whole however, the election results were a debacle for the Jana Sangh which succeeded in getting only three of its candidates through out of the 93 who had contested on its ticket. In the State legislatures it fared not much better where out of the 742

[398] Ibid. p. 5.
[399] Ibid. p. 6.
[400] Ibid. p. 7.
[401] Ibid. p. 10.
[402] Ibid. p. 11.
[403] Ibid. p. 16.

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candidates that had contested, only 33 were elected. In some provinces like East Punjab, where the Jana Sangh appeared to be the strongest, it could not secure a single vote. The most significant gain for the party however, was the recognition of the Jana Sangh as one of the four All India Parties by the Election Commission of India, on the basis of the number of votes polled by it.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) fared well, emerging only second to the ruling Congress Party in Parliament and as the second largest party in a number of State Assemblies. However, even with 26 seats, the CPI did not get more than 4.45 per cent of the total polled votes while the Socialist Party which got only twelve seats, and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) obtained nine seats, polled respectively 10.50 percent and 5.81 per cent. Its election manifesto criticised the Congress Party on a number of points, most importantly the slowness of its land reforms. Lambasting the Nehru Government as 'a Government of Landlords and Monopolists' the CPI manifesto declared 'We have before us the glorious example of China which under a government of People's Democracy has registered an advance that has amazed the whole world. It has freed the peasants from feudal shackles and increased food production by ten million tons. It is fast building its industries and roads.....it should not be forgotten that China was more backward than India, had to support a far bigger population and its economy was shattered by decades of war and devastation'.[404]

On the whole the opposition fared rather poorly. Collectively, the opposition parties secured more than 55 per cent of the total vote polled as compared with the 44.63 per cent garnered by the Congress. Yet in terms of seats this translated into an absolute victory for the

[404] Masani, M.R. *The Communist Party of India. A Short History* (Derek Verschoyle, London, 1954), p. 151.

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Congress which acquired 364 seats as against 125 won by the opposition put together. Furthermore, the opposition front of 125 was badly divided. The Communists and their allies, who had 26 members in the new Parliament, constituted the largest organised group in the opposition. The Socialists had 12 members and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party of Acharya Kripalani had 10. Their merger to form the Praja Socialist Party, combined to produce 22 seats. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the fourth All-India Party, secured only 3 members and the rest were represented by smaller regional parties or independents. Despite not being able to muster together the requisite number of seats to constitute a formal opposition group (50 seats were required), MP Shyma Prasad Mookerji emerged as the unofficial spokesman of the opposition. Criticising the Government's kid-glove approach towards Kashmir for example, Mookerji raised an important question, "I would like to know are Kashmiris Indian first and Kashmiri next or they are Kashmiris first and Indian next, or they are Kashmiris first, second and third and not Indian at all?"[405]

Following the resounding victory in the 1952 elections, Nehru's Cabinets began to reflect the new arrangement of power. His new Cabinet dropped all the 'Patelites', including Gadgil, Munshi, Diwarkar and Santhanam. It consisted of fourteen cabinet ministers (excluding Nehru) and four Ministers of State. Among the fourteen ministers were Kailas Nath Katju (Home Minister) and Lal Bahadur Shastri (Railways) – both from Allahabad, Nehru's hometown in Uttar Pradesh. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai (Food and Agriculture), who had been close to the Nehrus since the days of Motilal Nehru, was retained. In addition to these confidantes, several other Cabinet Ministers like Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, C.D.Deshmukh, T.T.Krishnamachari, Amrit Kaur and C.C.Biswas were otherwise political non-entities and owed their positions to the Prime Minister.

[405] Madhok, B. *Portrait of a Martyr*. (Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1969), p. 132.

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4.6. Conclusion

This chapter sought to contextualise Nehru at first, in terms of the ideological and intellectual parameters of the time, by comparing him with three contemporaries, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Subhas Chandra Bose. An attempt was made to summarise the differences in positions on key issues as revealed in their presidential speeches in the mid to late 1930s. The analysis of these speeches served to highlight how each responded to the challenges of the freedom struggle and the differences in the emphasis given to issues. Secondly, the chapter demonstrated the institutional constraints of the Congress party organisation over which Nehru managed to gradually assert control. By examining the various resolutions adopted by the Congress party and the speeches of different Congress presidents, the aim was to track Nehru's emergence as a central figure within the Congress party organisation. The chapter has revealed how Nehru's position on various policy issues seemed to harden in some cases and in others, to soften and furthermore, how the organisational and institutional mechanisms of the Congress party, as a party in power came to serve as instruments of influence and power consolidation. By 1955 it is posited that Nehru was at the peak of his power. For the next five sessions the President of the Congress party, U.N. Dhebar served as a reliable stooge, allowing Nehru to focus on flaunting his international persona and skills of diplomacy, on hammering out the second five year plan and fine-tuning his idea of a 'socialist pattern of society'.

The information presented in this chapter was meant to convey the 'structure of opportunities' which Nehru sought to mould in his favour, especially after he was chosen to be Prime Minister of newly independent India in 1947. Faced with important rivals such as Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and their respective constituencies, Nehru sought to

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position himself strategically on a number of central themes, namely economic policy, social reform and foreign policy. Opting for a different spatial standpoint on the spectrum of positions depending on the issue, Nehru had, by the mid-1950s managed to turn himself into the pivotal actor whose choices were to set the parameters for future policy-making. Observing this tendency towards dominance, authors such as Rajni Kothari developed the idea of a one-dominant party system under the Congress party which, after independence continued as a broad-based movement, 'involving within itself both dominant and dissident groups, and functioning alongside government as an agency of political penetration.'[406] However, Kothari's analysis really focuses on the period *after* 1962 and how the 'Congress System' survived the shocks of the 1967 state assembly elections and, not so much on the 1950s. This period, like in so many other books about India's modern political development, is neglected.

Arguing that time and sequence are important components of the analytic narrative, the thesis emphasizes the need for 'pre-history' and a more in-depth investigation into the origins of institutional arrangements rather than focusing on their replication. Hence, the transition to independence and the early years just after independence are considered to be crucial in understanding how Nehru consolidated his power. The following chapters turn towards the individual policies which act as prisms through which to observe the effects of vision, strategy and the structure of opportunities at play.

[406] Kothari, R. *Politics in India*, (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1970) p. 155.

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Chapter Five

The Planning Commission.

5.1. Introduction: the Puzzle.

5.2. Pre-history: the Origins of Planning in India.

5.3. The Structure of Opportunities at the time of the Constituent Assembly Debates.

5.4. The Planning Commission: an analytic narrative of original intentions, functions and the constraints on institution building.

5.5. Vision and Strategy in the framing of the First and Second Five Year Plans.

5.5.1. The First Five Year Plan: negotiated consensus.

5.5.2. The Second Five Year Plan: "the adoption of the socialist pattern of society as the national objective"

5.6. Analyzing the *political* origins of planning in India.

5.7. Conclusion: the Planning Commission as a repository of values.

5.1. Introduction: The Puzzle

The first empirical case study is the Planning Commission since it was the earliest of the three examples considered here to take formal shape in independent India. Established in 1950 the Commission has an important pre-history which the chapter begins by surveying. As chapter three demonstrated, out of the three areas, Nehru's thoughts on economic planning were the most fully evolved in terms of (a) conceptualising the problems at stake, (b)

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foreseeing the challenges ahead and, (3) envisioning possible solutions and methods of implementing policy. With this in mind the chapter presents an analytic narrative that recounts the setting up of the Planning Commission, the formulation of the First Five Year Plan and the substantive shift entailed in the Second Five Year Plan. This makes for an interesting investigation given that the first two five year plans are so different from each other in content.

Applying the method of process tracing, the narrative is guided by three sets of core propositions that were set out in chapter two:

i. Individuals choose the best action according to stable preference functions and the constraints facing them.
ii. Institutions can be explained by the *function* they serve.
iii. Vision alone enables the observer to understand Nehru, the political actor and his policy choices.

The argument is made that the changing *'structure of opportunities'* explains the shift in values encapsulated in the Second Five Year Plan. Whilst this was not a deviation from Nehru's original preferences, it represented a dramatic assertion of socialist principles and a clear change in the stated priorities of economic development compared with those entailed in the first Five Year Plan. This was possible because the costs of making this shift in priorities, emphasis and style were not high for Nehru in the mid-1950s. As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, Nehru was at the height of his power then. It is proposed that the setting up of the Planning Commission and the first Five Year Plan comprised important concessions but it was with the launch of the second Plan that Nehru was able to put his vision of economic development into action. Hence the consensus-driven

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approach was a temporary mechanism with which to gain time for Nehru had demonstrated that he held very strong ideas on the path of economic development an independent India would opt for. The chapter demonstrates this move away from consensus by tracing the steps of policy making and the policy positions adopted by Nehru and his allies.

The implications of the change in strategy are presented in the section on the political origins of planning which examines the Planning Commission as a repository of values. Three factors are considered in terms of their impact on the long-run shape and nature of the Planning Commission in post-independence India. These are (1) the cognitive limitations of the actor which include processes such as memory, inference and problem-solving and which can generate consequences that do not match the actor's original stated intentions, (2) the sequence of events and the path dependency that is generated as a result of particular choices taken at the expense of other options and, (3) the institutional framework which, by producing positive feedback effects, can given institutions a 'life of their own'. It is argued that one of the reasons for the persistence of the Planning Commission is that it has served as an effective mechanism through which the Prime Minister could exert control over economic policy. To this extent, the setting up of the Commission represents a highly successful strategy of Nehru, in that he managed to alter the structure of opportunities to his favour, achieving this *before* he infused the policy arena with his policy preferences.

A conclusion summarises the impact of Nehru's vision and the structure of opportunities in the choice of strategy used to institutionalise his preferences. The interpretation of data and events that emerges contrasts with existing views on why India came to adopt its particular economic strategy of planning with a focus on state-owned heavy industry at the expense of other sectors, most importantly agriculture but also education.

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Economists have argued that the country's decision-makers were forced to adopt such an approach due to economic reasons like export pessimism and the foreign exchange constraint[407] whilst others have attributed the particular choice of policies to Nehru's fervent commitment and belief in socialism.[408] Instead the thesis posits that having employed a consensus-building approach to the problem of economic development, Nehru was able to successfully set up the Planning Commission soon after independence. This institution became both an instrument by which to strengthen his political position and the mechanism through which his preferences could be translated into policy. However, as will be demonstrated below this was not an uncontested process and Nehru faced strong opposition from the business community as well as from within his own party.

Vivek Chibber's book *Locked in Place State-building and Late Industrialisation in India* provides an invaluable account of how development planning was launched in independent India, the strategy employed by the capitalist classes and the response of the state.[409] As its core research question the book asks why Indian elites failed to actualise their state-building agenda and is unusual in that it tries to reconstruct the different positions taken by the key actors within a structural context of political incentives that had emerged by the time of independence. The conclusion to emerge is also an atypical one, positing that the industrial class strongly and successfully resisted state regulation and discipline, and that this in turn not only negatively affected the *installation* of state institutions but also 'locked into

[407] Raj, K.N. & Sen, A.K. "Alternative Patterns of Growth Under Conditions of Stagnant Export Earnings", *Oxford Economic Papers*, 13/1 (February, 1961), pp. 43 – 52.
Dhar, P.N. "Achievements and Failures of the Indian Economy" in Appadorai, A (ed.) *India: Studies in Social and Political Development, 1947 – 1967* (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1968).
Bhagwati, J.N. & Chakravarty, S. "Contributions to Indian Economic Analysis: A Survey." *The American Economic Review*, LIX, 4/2 (September, 1969).
[408] Frankel, F. "Ideology and Politics in Indian Planning: The Problem of Indian Agricultural Development Strategy", *World Politics*, 19/4 (July 1967), pp.621 – 45.
[409] Chibber, V. *Locked in Place State-building and Late Industrialisation in India* (Princeton University Press, 2003).

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place' a sub-optimal arrangement.[410] This echoes Douglas North's work on the 'lock-in' effects of institutions which initially may have produced small advantages but which over time become too costly to overturn.

However, despite the uncommon approach, rigorous use of primary sources and interesting conclusion, Chibber's analysis comes across as lop-sided. Using explanatory variables such as *capitalist preferences* with respect to state-building and their impact on the *outcome* of the state-building project, he focuses too much on the agency of the capitalists whilst rendering the rest to structural factors or the 'balance of forces' which 'strengthened their hand at the expense of the state, through for example, the demobilisation of the labour movement'.[411] In the process the agency of state actors is neglected and reduced to a weakly responsive function where institutions were adapted and altered to accommodate the capitalist classes. In the end, despite the fact that the author highlights the deficiencies of India's development model as designed by the country's founding leaders and the long-run costs that were imposed, Nehru emerges virtually untouched, his position and motives are mostly unexplored. Hence, 'For all its shortcomings, the Nehru regime nevertheless evinced a degree of integrity that has been altogether absent in the regimes that followed.....there is no doubt that the top level of the Congress leadership was quite sincerely committed to a developmental agenda. Above all, Nehru's commanding presence in the cabinet ensured that such malfeasance as existed remained within limits.'[412] Nehru's role therefore is seen in terms of his being the guardian of good conduct and upholder of moral standards although this proposition is not substantiated with evidence in the book. What Chibber overlooks and which this chapter seeks to explore, is the impact of Nehru's own tactical decisions, his

[410] Ibid. See chapters 8 and 9.
[411] Ibid. p. 227.
[412] Chibber, V. *Locked in Place State-building and Late Industrialisation in India* (Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 249.

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willingness to compromise on core goals in order to consolidate his power and his instrumentalisation of an institution that was meant to serve the development purposes of the state.

5.2. Pre-history: the Origins of Planning in India.

Beginning in the 1930s a general consensus had emerged amongst less developed countries about the desirability of state-led rapid industrialisation. This was also the case in India.[413] Since the collapse of world markets during the Great Depression political pressure from business groups had advocated the need for protection from international competition, the need for state assistance in the acquisition of inputs, especially finance and raw materials as well as the need for some central coordination of economic policy. As a result this period saw the confluence of capitalist pressure and the interests of the political elite in favour of an interventionist state.

A variety of views and perspectives on economic development were available in the public arena in India during the 1930s. Within the Congress, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru did not see eye to eye on social and economic questions. Big business, influential in Congress policy-making and fund-raising, was apprehensive about planning, particularly as socialist-minded leaders like Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, gained some clout in the party, culminating in the setting up of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) in 1934. Congress policy resolutions had cautiously reflected the need for economic and social reform over the years. For example in 1929 at the Lahore Congress a resolution by the All India Congress Committee stated that, “in order to remove the poverty and misery of the Indian

[413] See the account by B.R.Tomlinson in his *Economy of Modern India, 1860 – 1970*, *The New Cambridge History of India*, Vol. 3.3. (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 132-144.

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people and to ameliorate the conditions of the masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure of society and to remove gross inequalities".[414] This was followed by the Karachi resolution in 1931, which, while making no overt declaration in favour of national planning, included the following, "Currency and exchange shall be regulated in the national interest…..The State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport".[415] However, opposition to such an approach was still strong and in 1934 the Congress Working Committee, passed a resolution stating that 'large and organised industries are in no need of the services of Congress organisations or of any Congress effort on their behalf'.[416] Nevertheless Nehru persisted and in his 1936 Faizpur presidential address he argued strongly in favour of heavy industrialisation and planning.[417]

Under Subhas Chandra Bose's first tenure as Congress president, the Congress National Planning Committee (NPC) was constituted in 1938 with Jawaharlal Nehru as chairman and a fourteen-member body. These captured a range of views including four industrialists, Puroshottam Thakurdas, A.D. Shroff, Ambalal Sarabhai and Walchand Hirachand; five scientists: Meghnath Saha, A.K.Saha,Nazir Ahmed, V.S. Dubey and J.C. Ghosh; three economists: K.T. Shah, Radha Kamal Mukherjee and M. Visvorsvaraya, a representative for industrial workers, N.M. Joshi and a 'token' Gandhian, J.C. Kumarappa of the All India Village Industries Association. Nehru described the composition of the Committee in the following way, "among the members are well-known industrialists, financiers, economists, professors and scientists as well as representatives of the Trade Union

[414] Zaidi, A. (ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. 9 (Chand & Co. Ltd, New Delhi, 1980), p. 623.
[415] Zaidi, A. (ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. 10 (Chand & Co. Ltd, New Delhi, 1980), p. 183.
[416] Zaidi, A. (ed.) *Congress History, 1885-1947*(London, 1965), p. 321.
[417] 1936 Presidential Address, *Jawaharlal Nehru and Socialism,* (Delhi, 1969), pp.18 – 20.

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Congress and of the Village Industries Association. The non-Congress Provincial Governments (Bengal, Punjab and Sind) co-operated with this Committee….Hard-headed Big Business was there, as well as people who are called idealists and doctrinaire, Socialists as well as near-Communists".[418]

Nehru as chairman had to find ways of balancing the criticism from conservative members who were sceptical of state intervention and the Gandhians who were against big business and heavy industry. As a result Nehru attempted to sell planning as an instrument that would benefit both cottage and large-scale industries. Hence he cleverly argued that the conflict was "one of emphasis. It is clear that in India today the development of cottage industries on a vast scale is essential for the well-being of the masses. It is equally clear the rapid development of large scale machine industry is an urgent need of the country. Without industrialisation no country can have political or economic freedom and even cottage industries cannot develop to any large extent if economic freedom is absent".[419]

Lasting just two years, the NPC soon fractured on issues that were to become the fault lines between state and capital in later years but, the experience as chairman gave Nehru a firsthand taste of the challenges of policy-making and consensus building in this field. Cataloguing a list of problems facing the development effort, Nehru noted the (1) lack of data and statistics; (2) lack of cooperation from the government of India; (3) lack of real interest in all-India planning on the part of the provincial governments; (4) lack of enthusiasm among 'important elements in the Congress; and (5) the apprehensions of big business.[420]

[418] Nehru, Jawaharlal *Discovery of India*, (Delhi, 1985), p.372.
[419] *National Herald*, 21/6/1939 in Gopal, S. (ed) *Selected Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 386 – 7.
[420] Nehru, Jawaharlal, *Discovery of India*, (Delhi, 1985), pp. 400 – 1.

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The NPC however, had not started from scratch. Drawing upon a precursor, Sir M. Visvesvarayya's 1934 treatise on the 'Planned Economy for India', industrialisation was hailed as the panacea to end all economic troubles. Envisioning the setting up of an Economic Council consisting mainly of expert economists and representative businessmen, Visvesvarayya recommended a consensus-building approach, where businessmen would be incorporated into the decision-making process. Most of the businessmen in the NPC appeared to be lukewarm about planning whilst Gandhi's followers objected to large-scale industry and commerce. Nehru, who at the time did not want to risk disunity in the area of economic policy, worked hard at developing a middle way. Thus, for instance when a clear division manifest itself on the subject of large-scale industry versus cottage industries, Nehru, undertook the task of proving that Congress policy, as expressed in the resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee (AICC), was compatible with large-scale industrialization. On 21 December 1938 he explained:

'It is clear that the Congress considered it unnecessary to push large-scale industries through its organization and left this to the State as well as to their own resources. It did not decide in any way against such large-scale industry. Now that the Congress is, to some extent, identifying itself with the State, it cannot ignore the question of establishing and encouraging large-scale industries…..It is clear therefore that not only is it open to this Committee and to the Planning Commission to consider the whole question of large-scale industries in India, in all its aspects, but that the Committee will be failing in its duty if it did not do so. There can be no planning if such Planning does not include big industries. But in making our plans we have to remember the basic Congress policy of encouraging cottage industries".[421]

[421] Shah, *Report of the NPC*, pp. 28, 36 – 7.

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Gandhi however, remained anti-planning, believing the Committee's work to be a waste of effort and labour[422] and it is important to note that Nehru was careful to tone down the rhetoric when necessary. Thus, he never officially joined the CSP and did not allow his differences with Gandhi to jeopardise his political career in the party, unlike Bose who, stood by his strong views on planning in opposition to Gandhi, going as far as to stand for re-election as Congress president in 1939 against Gandhi's explicit wishes. Winning the election against Gandhi's candidate, Pattavi Sitaramaya, Bose was ultimately forced to resign and subsequently suspended from the party, a development which Nehru did little to prevent or reverse.[423] Nehru's extensive jail sentences from 1940 to 1945 dealt the NPC a virtual death blow as it was a period during which it had formal existence only. After the end of the war three further sessions were held, but these, in the absence of sub-committee meetings and of any response from the provinces to an appeal for funds, failed to generate further interest.

In the meantime, planning had been taken up by the British Indian government, in response to the exigencies of war and the anticipated needs of post-war reconstruction. One of the first steps taken was the creation of an official Board of Industrial and Scientific Research that was followed by the establishment of a Reconstruction Committee of the Council, under the Viceroy's chairmanship and associated with a number of expert committees representing provincial governments, state governments and non-official organisations. In 1944 a Planning and Development Department was created and under the guidance of Sir Ardheshir Dalal, provincial and state governments were directed to set up their own planning organisations. To provide general guidance the Reconstruction Committee formulated and published its *Second Report on Reconstruction Planning* (1945) which provided a summary of the views held by the department of the Government of India.

[422] Gandhi to Nehru, 11/8/1939, in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958), pp.378 – 9.
[423] See chapter three for details.

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The document was surprisingly bold and socialistic in character. It proposed a fifteen year 'perspective' plan, and among its aims was the removal of 'the existing glaring anomaly of immense wealth side by side with abject poverty.[424] It not only recognized the need for large-scale industry but envisaged ownership by the state of those enterprises where private capital may not be forthcoming. It gave priority to the development of power resources and of important capital goods' industries. It envisaged a balanced regional development in which industry would not be confined to a few provinces and endorsed at least one of the principles of Gandhian economics by insisting that industries should be located in rural areas or small towns. In matters of rural development it emphasized the importance of building up an infrastructure (e.g. irrigation, anti-erosion and land reclamation measures) and pointed to the need for popular participation through cooperative societies and panchayats.

Of the other central planning documents issued at this time, one of the most important was the Industrial Policy Statement of 1945 which gave greater precision to the principles of industrial reconstruction embodied in the *Second Report on Reconstruction Planning.* Twenty major industries were to be brought under the control of the central government, while other 'basic industries of national importance' were to be nationalized if adequate private capital for their development was not forthcoming. Aircraft, automobiles, tractors, chemicals, dyes, iron and steel, prime movers, electrical machinery, machine tools, electro-chemicals and non-ferrous metals were mentioned specifically as potential candidates for this treatment. All others were to be left to private enterprise, but subjected to licensing, investment controls, and measures to ensure a fair deal for labour, the elimination of excessive profits, and the improvement of the quality of products. The government was also to have 'primary responsibility' for the development of transport facilities, power production, scientific and

[424] A.H.Hanson, *The Process of Planning* (OUP, London, 1966) p. 37.

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industrial research, and technical education.[425] The proposals contained in the document did not venture beyond the consensus that had emerged between the Bombay Planners (see below) and the government namely: the need to bring industrial policy under central control, the necessity for some degree of control over the economy by the state, and the need for some distributive measures by the state. To avoid confrontation there was no mention of labour as a partner in production or as having a right to share in profits. In addition it was made clear that, to the extent that the state did assume ownership or take direct control over enterprise, it would be confined to limits set by private capital itself.

An immediate effect of this official planning activity was that it stimulated Indians to produce their own plans. Of the three 'private' plans that had appeared by 1944 the best known was the so-called 'Bombay plan', sponsored by some of the country's most distinguished industrialists[426]: Purshotamdas Thakurdas, J.D.Tata, Sir Ardeshir Dalal, A.D.Shroff, Dr. John Matthai. D.G.Birla, Sir Shri Ram, Kasturbhai Lalbhai. Like M.Visvesvarayya's plan, this emphasized industrialization, proposing a quintupling of production in fifteen years. 'Production of power and capital goods' was to have priority, but to avoid hardship, prevent inflation, provide employment and economize capital resources, 'the fullest possible use' was to be made of small-scale and cottage industries in the production of consumer goods.

The Bombay Plan proposed to raise India's income within 15 years by 300 per cent and its per capital income by 200 per cent, a goal to be achieved by rapid industrialisation. The rise of income in industry was to be 500 per cent, in agriculture, 130 per cent and in

[425] A.H.Hanson, *The Process of Planning* (OUP, London, 1966), p.38.
[426] Purhostamdas Thakurdas & others: *A Plan of Economic Development for India* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1944).

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services, 200 per cent. A critical hurdle envisioned was the coordination and planning organisation, hence 'a national planning committee in which the various interests concerned will be represented and to which the responsibility for drawing up plans will be delegated. The actual execution of the plans will be the function of a supreme economic council working alongside the national planning committee under the authority of the central government'.[427]

At the same time, the 'People's Plan', promoted by M.N.Roy and the Indian Federation of Labour, was a very different kind of document.[428] Whereas the 'Bombay' plan had an empirical approach and said little about the kind of society at which it was aiming, the 'People's' plan assumed the desirability (and necessity) of socialism and was much concerned with the expansion of the public sector of the economy at the expense of the private. In this respect it anticipated the 'socialist pattern' of the 1955 Avadi resolution and the Second Five Year Plan. It did however distinguish itself from the Russian example by insisting that collectivization, as a solution to agricultural problems, should be strictly voluntary. Moreover it gave emphasis to agricultural development. Another distinctive feature was its complete lack of enthusiasm for cottage industries.

Finally, the 'Gandhian' plan, more an essay in economic morality, preaching the virtues of simplicity, manual labour, local self-sufficiency, decentralization and the independent village community[429], that revealed the impossibility of transforming Mahatma Gandhi's scattered and sometime ambiguous *dicta* on economic organization into a logical and coherent system. Yet there were some positive contributions for instance in its emphasis

[427] Purhostamdas Thakurdas & others: *A Plan of Economic Development for India* (1944).
[428] B.N.Banerjee & others, *People's Plan for Economic Development of India, being the Report of the Post-War Reconstruction Committee of the Indian Federation of Labour*, (Delhi, 1944).
[429] Agarwal, S.N. *The Gandhian Plan of economic development for India* (Padma Publications, Bombay, 1944).

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on popular participation and insistence that the willing cooperation of the ordinary villager must be won and which anticipated the *panchayati raj* system.[430]

Without a planning *machine* in place, the immediate utility of these plans was very limited. Such a machine had existed in the form of the Planning and Development Department, but which was disbanded in 1946, despite Congress protests. The question of what should replace it was referred by the interim government to an Advisory Planning Board, with K.C.Neogy[431] as Chairman and K.T.Shah[432] and Penderel Moon[433] as joint Secretaries, each of whom had already worked closely with Nehru. Its terms of reference were 'to do a rapid survey of the field and to make recommendations regarding the coordination and improvement of planning, and as regards objectives and priorities and the future machinery of planning'.[434] It was given only two months to produce its report which saw light on 18 December 1946.

The most important section of the Board's report concerned the machinery of planning. First, it defined the 'legitimate functions of any planning machinery established under the Central Government' as, (1) scrutinizing and co-ordinating provincial plans and the plans of the central departments; (2) advising on the allocation of central funds for development purposes; (3) formulating plans for the development of major industries and important minerals; (4) advising on state aid to and state control of industries; (5) advising on internal and foreign trade; (6) advising on monetary and financial policy; (7) watching and

[430] A form of local governance at the village level.
[431] Appointed Chairman of the first Finance Commission in November 1951, and a member of the Union Cabinet under Nehru.
[432] General Secretary of National Planning Committee in 1938 and a leading economist at the time.
[433] Britishman who was a member of the Indian Civil Service .
[434] A.H.Hanson, *The Process of Planning. A Study of India's Five Year Plans. 1950-64* (Oxford University Press, 1966, London), p. 44.

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stimulating progress, compiling and publishing statistics, suggesting the adjustments and modifications, and initiating new plans; (8) allocating material resources in short supply; and (9) examining the implications of scientific research and discovery for social welfare. Despite the lack of specific mention of agriculture, this was the clearest definition of the planning function that had emerged from any deliberations so far.[435]

Some of these functions, the Board pointed out, were already being performed by the Co-ordinating Committee of the Cabinet, the Commerce Department, the Tariff Board and the Planning Branch of the Department of Industries and Supplies. But there was no specific provision for number 7 and none at all for numbers 8 and 9. More importantly, there was 'no agency for taking a comprehensive view of planning as a whole and for tracing the interactions and repercussions of all the various plans, projected or in operation'.[436] For this purpose, 'a single, compact, authoritative organization is required which should be responsible directly to the Cabinet…..and which should devote its attention continuously to the whole field of development'. Furthermore, it was emphasized that such a commission must be non-political and non-ministerial. It might consist of either five or three members. Whatever its size and composition the Commission should be primarily advisory in character, except that it would act as a 'Priorities Board' for the allocation of material resources.

The Planning Commission which eventually came into being, resembled these recommendations very closely except for the fact that it eventually emerged with much more of a *political* role than envisioned. Important support for the creation of a Planning Commission came from the Economic Programme Committee of the Congress[437], whose

[435] Ibid., p 45.
[436] Ibid. p.45.
[437] AICC Economic Programme Report (1948).

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membership included Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad[438], N.G.Ranga[439], Shankarreo Deo and John Matthai.[440] Appointed by the All India Congress Committee on 17 November 1947, it reported unanimously, on 25 January 1948. No immediate action could be taken on the recommendations due to the chaos unleashed by partition, the first armed conflict with Pakistan, the complex process of drafting a constitution, integration of the princely states and the threat of a Communist rebellion. As a result a dispirited feeling had set in by 1950 with business confidence at a low.[441]

The setting up of a Planning Commission in 1950 represented a new beginning, an initiative that was spearheaded by Jawaharlal Nehru. As one commentator wrote: 'It was he who converted the Congress to the idea of planning, and he who continued to insist on its importance at times when others, superficially more immediate, questions were tending to push it into the background'.[442] This, it must be admitted was no small achievement, granted that the State had been associated with British oppression and Nehru was arguing that with independence, the State would reform itself and work towards improving the well-being of its people. To understand how Nehru proposed to accomplish this and to trace the continuity between Nehru's approach and the final phase of colonial government it is necessary to turn to a closer analysis of the steps that brought about the Planning Commission into existence and its mandate for action.

[438] Muslim scholar, one of the most prominent Muslim members of the Congress party. Following independence became India's first Minister of Education.
[439] Freedom fighter, parliamentarian and powerful leader of the peasant movement.
[440] Economist, Businessman and first Finance Minister of India.
[441] For an impression of the general mood see: D. Thorner: 'Problems of Economic Development in India' in Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science, March 1950; D.R.Gadgil, 'The Economic Prospect for India', in *Pacific Affairs*, June 1949.
[442] A.H.Hanson, *The Process of Planning* (OUP, London, 1966) p. 48.

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5.3. The Structure of Opportunities at the time of the Constituent Assembly Debates.

The discussions surrounding the strategy of economic development and the role of the state had by the late 1940s produced something of a consensus between the capitalist, industrialist leaders and the Congress party, as seen above. However, at the same time a more radical interest group had formed in the shape of the labour movement under the umbrella of the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), an autonomous federation whose leadership included Congress members but also extended to Communist Party members. Since the Congress had decided not to allow functional representation of organisations within the movement, the AITUC had by independence evolved its own leadership cadre and following. Furthermore in August 1946, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution that was highly critical of the strike activity that had been launched, decried the exploitation of labour unrest and called for legislation on labour issues.

Facing the two wings of capital and labour interests Nehru sought to establish himself as the bridge-builder. Heading the interim government, Nehru constituted an Advisory Planning Board (APB) to draw up the broad framework for plans. A report by the APB in mid-1947 enunciated a set of policies that broadly represented continuity with earlier statements. The idea of state assistance to industry, financial and logistical, remained at the core of the programme for national development and central to this remained the commitment to protecting local firms from foreign competition. At this point therefore various statements and reports were issued assuring the capitalist classes that the new state would be committed to using public funds as a means of accelerating the development of private industry. In late 1947 the Congress appointed a committee to produce a draft for the party's economic policy.

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Chaired by Nehru and dominated by Gandhians and leftists[443] the recommendations were in keeping with the previous trend, calling for land reform, fair wages, labour rights, economic planning but it also stood out for recommending a progressive *socialisation* of industry.

Faced with an outcry by business leaders and simultaneously, the exit of the Congress Socialists from the Congress party in March 1948, this marked a low point in Nehru's attempt at consensus-building and heralded a change in his strategy. Seeking to retain his position as pivotal actor however, in early 1948 Nehru led a discussion in Parliament *against* a proposed resolution endorsing a socialist path for Indian development.[444] Nehru's reply centred on the need to judge according to the circumstances and to bring about change in a manner that would not upset the present structure or interfere with production.[445] Nehru's public position became one of urging that existing industry be left alone and that future industry needed to be reserved for the state.[446]

Shortly after this the government issued its *Industrial Policy Statement* (IPS) which laid down the broad contours of industrial policy for the country and followed in the footsteps of Nehru's new approach. The IPS rejected nationalization as an instrument of policy and attempted to dilute the elements that had displeased the business sector in the report of the Congress Economic Programme Committee. The IPS divided industry into three areas: the industry to be reserved for the state, a second in which existing private firms would be allowed to expand but where new undertakings would be the responsibility of the state, and a

[443] Apart from Nehru, the committee included Jayprakash Narayan, Maulana Azad, Shankarrao Deo, Achyut Patwardhan, N.G.Ranga, Gulzarilala Nanda and J.C.Kumarappa.

[444] The resolution proposed the 'economic pattern of this country shall be socialist economy based on the principle of nationalization of key industries and co-operative and collective farming and socialisation of the material resources of the country'. See Karimuddin, *Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Debates*, 17th Feb, 1954

[445] See *Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Debates*, February 17, 1948.

[446] See his speech to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry on March 28, 1948, contained in Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru Selected Works*, 2nd Series, Volume 5, pp. 385 – 96.

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third which would be left to private capital but subject to state regulation. In the first category, defence, railways and atomic energy were mentioned and the second section concentrated on capital goods and infrastructure. With socialisation of industry off the agenda the next hurdle in policy formulation became the degree and nature of regulation that the state would exercise over capital. This formed the substance of the Industries Development and Regulation Act (the IDRA) which marked the next step in the translation of the Congress program into policy.

Within two months of the release of the IPS, a bill governing industrial policy was submitted by the Congress for passage in the Assembly. The motives behind the bill were twofold: first, to take power over industrial policy away from the provincial governments (which had been the decision-makers in industrial policy under the British) and second, to devise a mechanism through which to keep investments in congruence with economic plans. Industrial licensing emerged as the instrument through which the central government could maintain a control over industry. In March 1949 the bill was submitted to the Constituent Assembly for approval as the Industries (Development and Control Bill).[447] The bill mandated that every new industrial establishment above a certain size, as well as every substantial expansion of an industrial establishment above the minimum size, would require a license.[448] It also made contravention of the state's directions in these matters illegal and punishable by law. The bill endowed the state with punitive powers and also condoned the use of coercion if it were found that industrialists were undertaking practices that might reduce the firms' production capacity or economic value. A Central Advisory Council for Industry was to be set up containing representatives of industry and consultation was to be

[447] The name was changed later to the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act when it was passed in 1951.
[448] See copy of the bill as published by the *Hindustan Times*, March 24, 1949.

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mandatory on occasions where the state thought it necessary to revoke a licence or to take over management of a firm. Nevertheless the ultimate authority lay with the state.

The response from the business community was to condemn the bill and through the direct lobbying by industrialists, the passing of the bill was stalled. Hence when the bill was introduced in the Constituent Assembly in late March 1949, it was handed over to a Select Committee to be reviewed and resubmitted for consideration in the following session. Through 1949 and 1950 the various organs of the business community rallied to pressure the government. Among the more prominent organisations these included the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Indian Merchants Chamber (IMC), the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Associated Chambers of Commerce (ASSOCHAM), and the Madras Chamber of Commerce.

It is important to note the density of institutions that were already in existence and that they were organised enough to exert pressure on the government. At this point Industry Minister, S.P.Mookerjee explained both privately and publicly that the government was willing to make the bill more acceptable to both domestic and foreign business and was open to suggestions but that the administration was constrained by having to avoid appearing as though it was succumbing to pressure from the business community.[449]

Presenting its own bill to the government, FICCI proposed that all authority to license and the disciplinary power accompanying it, be withdrawn. Instead the industrial policy would be carried out through the formation of industrial committees in each industry which would be staffed primarily with businessmen from that particular sector. The state would still

[449] Chibber, V. *Locked in Place. State Building and Late Industrialisation in India* (Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 140 – 141.

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have the power to regulate but this would be filtered through two mechanisms: the Central Advisory Council as well as the sectoral industrial committees. Hence regulation would take the form of *self-regulation*. In essence the proposal by FICCI represented an attempt to table a maximalist position in order to put the state on the defensive and to open up space for negotiation and more realistic demands. State intervention, it was recognised, was inevitable as well as desirable given the economic constraints that business faced both in terms of demand and supply capacity. Hence, they could not attack 'planning' per se but sought to minimise the disciplinarian powers of the state. Taking action, the business community launched a massive lobbying campaign, targeting V.B. Patel who was known to be pro-capital as well as Nehru's chief rival in the cabinet and in the party.[450]

In 1950 therefore the path for India's economic development had not yet been set given that there were competing actors and ideas about what would be most effective and beneficial. Nevertheless despite the reservations and uncertainty surrounding its terms of reference, the Planning Commission came into being in early 1950, representing an initial successful step in the direction towards Nehru's vision of a planned, socialistic economy.

5.4. The Planning Commission: an analytic narrative of original intentions, functions and the constraints on institution building.

The Government of India's intention to create a Planning Commission was announced to the interim Lok Sabha on 28 February 1950 by the Minister of Finance in his budget speech and the Commission was subsequently established on 15 March by Cabinet

[450] See Chopra, P.N. (ed.) *The Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel* (Konark Publishers, Delhi, 1999), Vol. XIV "Note to Nehru on Economic Malaise", 30 Dec.1949, p. 270.

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resolution. Some criticised the method of bringing it into existence, arguing that the passing of a law would have been preferable. The Commission was however, originally conceived as an 'arm' of the Cabinet, to have purely advisory status, and its creators evidently thought that the less formal method of creation would afford greater flexibility and possibility of experimentation.

The resolution began by briefly recounting the history of economic planning in India and explaining the circumstances which demanded a better co-ordination of development programmes: 'The need for comprehensive planning based on a careful appraisal of resources and on an objective analysis of all the relevant economic factors has become imperative. These purposes can best be achieved through an organisation free from the burden of the day-to-day administration, but in constant touch with the Government at the highest level.' The Commission created to meet this need, was to take as its basic terms of reference the following Directive Principles of State Policy embodied in the Constitution[451]:

(a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood;

(b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to serve the common good; and

(c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment.

[451] *The Constitution of India* (India Law House, New Delhi, 2004), p. 16.

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Establishing itself firmly from within the Constitution, the Commission was to perform the following seven functions:

1. Make an assessment of the material, capital and human resources of the country, including technical personnel, and investigate the possibilities of augmenting such of these resources as are found to be deficient in relation to the nation's requirements;
2. Formulate a Plan for the most effective and balanced utilisation of the country's resources;
3. On a determination of priorities, define the stages in which the Plan should be carried out and propose the allocation of resources for the due completion of each stage;
4. Indicate the factors which are tending to retard economic development, and determine the conditions which in view of the current social and political situation, should be established for the successful execution of the Plan;
5. Determine the nature of the machinery which will be necessary for securing the successful implementation of each stage of the Plan in all its aspects;
6. Appraise from time to time the progress achieved in the execution of each stage of the Plan and recommend the adjustments of policy and measures that such appraisal may show to be necessary;
7. Make such interim or ancillary recommendations as appear to be appropriate either for facilitating the discharge of the duties assigned to it or on a consideration of the prevailing economic conditions, current policies, measures and development programmes; or on an examination of such specific problems as may be referred to it for advice by the Central or State Governments.

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The resolution also specified, clearly and briefly, the Commission's role in the system of government: 'The Planning Commission will make recommendations to the Cabinet. In framing its recommendations, the Commission will act in close understanding and consultation with the Ministries of the Central Government and the Governments of the States. The responsibility of taking and implementing decisions will rest with the Central and the State Governments'.

Named as the chairman, Nehru was originally the only minister member. The deputy chairman, Gulzarilal Nanda was a prominent Congressman with a special knowledge of labour questions. Among the other members, V.T. Krishnamachari was an administrator with long and varied experience, Chintaman Deshmukh, a retired ICS man who had served as Governor of the Reserve Bank, G.L. Mehta, a businessman who had been President of the Indian Tariff Board, and R.K.Patil an administrator and politician who, at the time of appointment was working as Food Commissioner. However, the Commission soon veered towards becoming more of a ministerial body, beginning, as early as in May 1950, when C.D.Deshmukh, upon succeeding John Matthai as Finance Minister, became a member cum minister. Then, in 1951, the Deputy Chairman, Gulzarilal Nanda, was appointed both Minister of Irrigation and Power and Minister of Planning. In the latter capacity, his main duty was to act as liaison between the Commission and the Houses of Parliament. C.D.Deshmukh's successors as Finance Minister, T.T.Krishnamachari and Morarji Desai, were also appointed members of the Commission, setting in place the convention of the Finance Minister automatically becoming a member. Further ministerial appointments in 1956 included V.K.Krishna Menon as Minister without portfolio and later Minister of Defence, who also became a Planning Commission member, and in 1962 when former Finance Minister, T.T.Krishnamachari returned to the Commission in the capacity of Minister

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without Portfolio. By late 1962 the Commission contained no fewer than five minister members, all of high status in the political hierarchy.

As a critic, D.R.Gadgil[452] had this to say about the Planning Commission: 'The preparation of the plan itself may be said to have two aspects. The first is that of definition of the planning problem and of the proper approach of planning in India, and the construction of a framework of the plan. The second is detailed formulation of programmes, targets and outlays together with estimations of proceeds of taxes and loans, foreign aid, and with making explicit economic policy decisions involved in the whole process. In relation to the first, it has been admitted on all hands that the performance of the Indian Planning Commission has been at an exceptionally high level…

In relation to the drawing out of detailed programmes, targets etc, the position at the beginning of the First Five Year Plan was comparatively easy. The Planning Commission confronted a situation in which a large number of commitments had already been entered into by the Union and the state governments….The task the Planning commission had to perform was essentially that of rationalisation, co-ordination, some pruning, and, very sparingly, a little addition……The main achievement of the Planning Commission within two years of its establishment therefore was formulation of the general Indian approach to planning and the coordination of programmes and policies of the Union Ministries and the Central Government so as to put the large majority of the existing commitments in a fairly orderly framework. The Planning commission, at this stage, is seen retrospectively to have proved of

[452] Economist and later, deputy-chairman of the Planning Commission.

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considerable use in persuading state governments to rationalise their schemes of expenditure and moderate their continuous demands on the centre".[453]

Nevertheless, offering an early warning Gadgil emphasised the fact that 'If the Planning commission looks upon itself as a technical and advisory body, it can make an effort to make the examination of individual proposals and its total recommendations as objective as possible…However, if in one and the same authority, both aspects of the process (formulation and execution) are inextricably mixed, one or the other must suffer. Inevitably, it is the objective approach that suffers'.[454]

A further problem Gadgil noted concerned "the activities of the Planning Commission regarding formulation and execution of policy..... This is due to the impossibility of discovering what specific advice has been tendered by the Planning Commission in any particular context, apart from what is contained in the two plan reports. The difficulty arises not only because there is no published record of the later communications of the Planning Commission, but also because the Planning Commission is active in this sphere to the extent of even advising individual ministries about matters to be placed before the Cabinet….. the activities of the Planning Commission in this context appear indistinguishable from the those of the ministries and the Cabinet".[455] 'The situation can be remedied only by going back to the functions of the Planning Commission as originally laid down and making the Planning Commission fulfil them…..The Planning Commission as an organisation, not under any particular ministry and with powers in the appropriate context to deal directly with central ministries and governments of states, should retain its present status. What is important is that

[453] D.R.Gadgil, *Planning and Economic Policy in India* (Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona, 1965), p. 154 – 155.
[454] Ibid., p. 163.
[455] Ibid. p. 166.

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it should no longer have any executive functions and should not be mixed up with the essentially political process of final policy-making. Final decisions regarding economic policy should fully rest with the special committee of the Cabinet…..'[456]

At the same time there was opposition to the Planning Commission from within the cabinet, with Finance Minister, John Matthai ultimately making it his reason for resignation. His major objection was that the Planning Commission was superseding the cabinet in major decisions and aspired to becoming a 'super-cabinet'.[457] His statement of resignation is worth quoting extensively:

"In regard to existing plans the Planning Commission of the kind now set up is totally unnecessary and in fact is hardly qualified for the work. The Ministries concerned are in a much better position to determine the order of priority.… I have objected not merely to the idea of a Planning Commission but also to its method of working. The main reason urged for setting up a Planning Commission was that the Government was preoccupied with the day-to-day administration and therefore, had little leisure for thinking and planning ahead. But the way things are working out today, the Planning Commission have been asking for a voice in the discussion of current economic problems and have in fact, with the approval of the Prime Minister, been associated with the Cabinet in these discussions.…The result is that the Commission tends to become a parallel Cabinet and secondly it increases the area of argumentation and discussion.…In my opinion Cabinet responsibility has definitely weakened since the establishment of the Planning Commission.

[456] Ibid. p. 170.

[457] See the correspondence between Matthai and Nehru in Gopal's *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Series 2, Vol. 14, part 2, pp. 227 – 250.

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The members of the Planning Commission have been given the same place in the warrant of precedence as cabinet ministers and their salaries and allowances have also been fixed in accordance with those of cabinet ministers.

…The present arrangement under which the Finance Minister becomes a member of the Commission will accentuate this trend. It is an unsound arrangement that a cabinet minister holding the key portfolio of finance should be a member of a committee of which the working head, namely the deputy chairman, is a paid employee of the Government. The arrangement is bound to weaken the authority of the Finance Minister and also of the Cabinet".[458]

Mathai's resignation put Nehru on the defensive and he had to issue statements promising that the Planning Commission would not encroach upon ministerial prerogatives. In the direct aftermath Sardar Patel also wrote to Nehru expressing disapproval of the Commission's actions to which Nehru quickly responded that the Planning Commission 'was anxious not to do anything which comes in the way of any ministry'.[459] As the above shows, whilst there were voices supporting a planning apparatus with strong powers of enforcement, there was by no means an unanimous consensus. Key figures and close advisors to Jawaharlal Nehru like K.T.Shah and Gulzarilal Nanda supported a strong Planning Commission which would have the power not only to impose discipline on firms but also to control the policy process. However, when the Planning Commission was finally installed in March 1950 its powers were clearly limited. Its enumerated powers were basically advisory with real power left to the ministries. The Commission's prerogative was confined to devising comprehensive plans and 'making recommendations to the cabinet' which had no binding power. Even after Matthai's resignation, a number of ministers expressed their dislike of the Commission and

[458] Quoted in Hindustan Times, June 3, 1950.
[459] Nehru to Patel. 5/25/1950 in Gopal's Jawaharlal Nehru Selected Works, 2nd Series, vo. 14, part 2.

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Nehru complained that it fell upon him to plea with ministries that they cooperate with it in policy implementation.[460] In the meantime the actual centres for administering and implementing industrial policy remained where they had been: budgeting remained with Finance, trade with Commerce and so forth.

However, despite the disagreements over the nature and scope of the Planning Commission's mandate, what scholars have highlighted is the dramatic, substantive and procedural changes that were brought about with the introduction of the Second Five Year Plan. Baldev Raj Nayyar for instance describes the First Five Year Plan as limited both in its aims and the demands that it made on the population, and that the planners readily acknowledged this character of the Plan. It was not a Plan which envisioned the government acting as an independent variable with the goal of restructuring the economy and society, although there was undoubtedly an emphasis placed on the important role of the State in economic transformation. He points out the timid nature of the public sector effort and how a major reliance for development was placed on the private sector.[461] Equally, the planners were reluctant to impose any sacrifices on the population, and their policy recommendations in respect of resource mobilisation were characterised by moderation and restraint. The planners seemed to be conscious of the constraints under which they had to function recognising that, 'For planning to proceed with the necessary momentum and continuity, it is essential that the country adopts a programme of action which reflects the unity of outlook and approach among the members of the party in power and draws forth at the same time the support and co-operation from shades of opinion outside the party. It is through enlargement of the area of agreement that conditions can be created for the most effective mobilisation of

[460] See Gopal,S. *Jawaharlal Nehru*, Volume 2, (Cambridge Mass, Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 99. and Nehru to Rajagoplachari, 10/7/50, JNSW, 2nd Series, Vol. 15, part 1. p. 34.
[461] Nayar, Baldev Raj *The Modernisation Imperative and Economic Planning*, (Vikas Publishing, New Delhi, 1972).

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the community's resources towards the common objective of all-round economic development'.[462]

Despite this limitation, the planners did conceive of their objectives in larger terms. Taking their cue from the Directive Principles in the Constitution[463], they stated at the beginning of the First Plan document that, the 'central objective of planning in India at the present stage is to initiate a process of development which will raise living standards and open out to the people new opportunities for a richer and more varied life'. The path to eliminating poverty was seen as lying not only in redistributing wealth but also in increasing production. As a result the planners were torn throughout the Plan between the compulsions of production and the necessity of distribution. While committed to creating a more equal and just society, no frontal attack on inequalities was planned, for they were anxious to 'ensure a continuity of development without which, in fact, whatever measures, fiscal or other, might be adopted for promoting economic equality might only end up in dislocating production and even jeopardizing the prospects of ordered growth'.[464]

Apart from the concern over production, there was at the same time, a more fundamental conception, a Parsonian conception – of the nature of society and politics underlying the social change.[465] The planners advocated the belief that the basic premise of democratic planning is that society can develop as an integral whole and the position which

[462] *First Five Year Plan*, Chapter One: 'Planning: Economic and Social Aspects', available on Planning Commission official website: http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index9.html
Seen last on 8.09.2008

[463] Section IV, Article 38 of the Constitution.

[464] *First Five Year Plan*, Chapter One: 'Planning: Economic and Social Aspects', available on Planning Commission official website: http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index9.html
Last seen on 9.09.2008

[465] By 'Parsonian' the thesis is referring to the idea that social structures are central to an understanding of society and, that social functions can be deduced from these structures.

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particular classes occupy at any given time can be altered without reliance on class hatreds or the use of violence. No shattering of the inherited social system was thus envisaged, rather faith for progress in this direction was placed in the privileged classes that they will respect the democratic system and the changes that result from its operation. The state's obligation to promote change was accepted and even the undertaking of risks in this direction was urged but only in the context of 'an appraisal of the capacity of the community to hold together under the stress of major structural changes and of its various sections to maintain a high standard of discipline and restraint while the necessary adjustments are taking place'.[466]

The allocation of resources among the different sectors of the economy represented little effort at changing the structure of the economy. The planners recognised that 'the backwardness of the Indian economy is reflected in its unbalanced occupational structures', with nearly 70% of the population employed in agricultural occupations though even this had failed to assure food self-sufficiency. The complementarity of agriculture and industry was clearly underlined, but it was felt necessary 'on economic as well as on other grounds, first of all to strengthen the economy at the base and to create conditions of sufficiency and even plenitude in respect to food and war materials (since these were) the wherewithal for further development'.[467]

The first plan was launched within a year of the formation of the Planning Commission, at a time when the machinery to actually translate the stated aims and goals into practice had to be tested. Development Councils at sectoral and industry levels had been proposed as the link between the state and industrialists but were yet to come into existence. These were meant to gather information, develop targets, identify firms that were laggards

[466] Ibid.
[467] Ibid.

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and make recommendations on where additional investment was needed. Congress ministers described their function explicitly as a "brake" to be placed on the state's use of coercion over firms.[468] Speaking to critics in the Constituent Assembly, Industry Minister H.K.Mahtab explained the role of the Councils in the following manner, 'The introduction of the Development Councils is the most important feature of the Bill (the IDRA). These Councils will keep in close touch with the industries, and try to help them in all possible ways. Issue of directions will come in only when the Development Councils will fail in their method of persuasion....'[469] Whilst these bodies were meant to act as an interface, the members were to be nominated by the state and would be invested with state powers to coerce firms into complying with overall developmental goals and priorities as issued from above. Held up because of resistance from the business lobby, by the time the First Five Year Plan had been officially launched, the Development Councils were not yet in place and the Industries Development and Regulation Act (IDRA) which articulated the government's industrial policy was itself under attack and review.

Hence, at the time of the First Five Year Plan although the Planning Commission was the agency in charge of designing plans in India, it did not have direct control over the critical instruments needed to implement a plan – the annual budget, the allocation of investment licenses and the allocation of foreign exchange which remained under the different ministries. It is interesting to note the self-effacing tone adopted by Nehru in his letters to members of the cabinet in 1952 at the start of the first five year plan. For example, in letters to his Minister for Planning, Gulzarilal Nanda dated September 8 and 10, Nehru was insistent that

[468] See Industry Minister H.K. Mahtab's speech on October 11, 1951, *Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Debates* (Delhi: Government of India, 1951), column 4649.
[469] Ibid. Columns 4649 – 4650.

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the Planning Commission ought to present its report to the Cabinet for consideration.[470] By late 1953 however, Nehru was voicing his concern about the way in which the Planning Commission was developing. In his words, it '(had) become much too amorphous and diffused a body and ha(d) no organic unity left'.[471] This was due to the struggle for power just before and after independence as a result of which the supporters of a strong planning apparatus were forced to compromise and graft the Planning Commission onto the existing economic set up rather than restructuring the latter around the aims of economic planning. This had long-run repercussions for India's economic strategy which adopted as a core principle, the dispersal of authority which meant that the planners had no control over how other agencies interpreted and implemented policy.

In theory the Planning Commission ought to have been involved at two critical stages: at the initial point of formulating the plan based on an appraisal of the state of the economy and of particular sectors. Then, based on sectoral reports, the Commission would begin the process of setting targets for each sector which would in turn be translated into annual plans. Within the annual plan individual investment projects would be up for bidding and realised through the granting of licenses to applications. The funding for these projects would come from a portion of the annual budget known as the capital budget and theoretically the economic ministries would submit projects each year to the Finance Ministry, which would check to ensure that the projects were within the limits of the annual budget, sending them to the Planning Commission for a final vetting so as to ensure their conformity with the targets of the plan.[472]

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[470] Gopal, S. (ed.) *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Series Two, Volume 19 (Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, New Delhi, 1989 -), pp. 101 – 103.
[471] Ibid., Series Two, Volume 24, p. 128.
[472]Chibber, V. *Locked in Place. State-building and Late Industrialisation in India.* (Princeton University Press, 2003) p. 179.

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In practice the planners were marginalised. Planners found it difficult to elicit the necessary information from ministries. According to Chibber's research, the Commission came to increasingly rely upon its own sources of information, often gathered by outside statistical organisations that used past trends rather than actual industry information as the basis for forecasting.[473] Furthermore the machinery for operationalising the plans was delayed until the end of the second plan. Until the third plan, the process of integrating the five year plan into annual budgetary provisions was left up to the Finance Ministry and even after this was officially changed, the Finance Ministry continued to play the central role in budgeting without consulting the Planning Commission at all. Nor was the flow of information streamlined in any organised way. Ministries were not made to establish any uniform machinery for transmitting information to and from the Planning Commission. In fact it was common knowledge that the ministries jealously guarded whatever flow of information did occur both vertically (between the ministry and the Commission) as well as horizontally (between ministries). As a result no ongoing process for evaluating plans was put in place.

Compounding all this was the internal structure of the Indian State which maintained the principle of ministerial autonomy. Each ministry was handed its task and no other agency had the power or authority to demand results. Restructuring the state was not an option so instead inter-ministerial committees of high-ranking bureaucrats were created, adding yet another node in the increasingly complex maze of the state apparatus. A side-effect of this framework was that, in response to these conditions, the ministries felt the need to further protect, maintain and consolidate their autonomy and self-sufficiency.

[473] Ibid. p. 179.

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The practical difficulties and inefficiencies notwithstanding, Nehru's ability to influence the overall direction of economic policy was enhanced through the establishment of the Planning Commission. This can most notably be seen in the way in which the *Mahalanobis* strategy became the operational model for the Second Five Year Plan (see below). As Michael Brecher, an observer at the time put it, "Nehru's role in the planning process is crucial, despite the fact that he lacks expert knowledge of economics and finance. In fact, he influences the entire process, from the drafting stage to implementation. Firstly, he stands at the centre of the decision-making structure by virtue of his positions as PM, Chairman of the Planning Commission and Chairman of the National Development Council[474] – and because he is Jawaharlal Nehru. He is the link between the planning agencies and the Government and is brought into any matter requiring cabinet approval, notably broad decisions concerning targets, aims and priorities. Secondly, because of his multiple positions and personal prestige he is the central focus of attention for all pressure groups – the Commission itself and individual members, Cabinet Ministers with special projects, State Ministers seeking attention to their local needs, Congressmen anxious to please their constituents, trade unions and employer associations, and special interest groups or individuals like Vinoba Bhave[475] and cooperative associations, community development officials etc. …..Not the least important is his role as liaison between the planners and the people. Nehru is the most effective salesman of planning in the country as a whole".[476]

Hence, while Nehru may not have been involved in the minutiae of policy formulation and implementation he was a central interlocutor who carried the political weight needed for

[474] Set up in August 1952 the National Development Council (NDC) consisted of the Prime Minister (Chairman), Central Cabinet Ministers, Chief Ministers of the States and Members of the Planning Commission. The NDC became the apex body, taking final decisions regarding the size, contents, objects and strategies of the Plan. The Planning Commission functions as an advisory body to the NDC.

[475] Freedom fighter and initiator of the *Bhoodan* or Land Gift movement which sought to instigate land reform.

[476] Brecher, M (1959), pp. 523 – 4.

www.historymarg.com

a certain perspective to gain predominance within the party and the cabinet. As a result it becomes necessary to study Nehru's pronouncements on the subject of planning and economic development to gain an insight into the preferences that had come to hold sway by the mid-1950s. The substantive shift that occurred with the Second Five Year Plan is illuminating as a demonstration of the extent to which Nehru felt secure enough by the mid-1950s to finally institutionalise a socialistic programme of economic development.

5.5. Vision and Strategy in the framing of the First and Second Five Year Plans.

5.5.1. The First Five Year Plan: negotiated consensus.

Ostensibly with the aim of promoting discussion, the First Five Year Plan was preceded by a *Draft Outline*. Emphasizing the *democratic* nature to the Indian approach to planning, the document foresaw an important role for private initiative and investors. Furthermore the checks and balances of the federal system were invoked to ensure that the Centre could not dictate to the States. The 'Pre-Plan', as it came to be known, underlined the need for unanimity and consensus, arguing that without it the sacrifices necessary could not be made.[477]

Planning was conceived of as a democratic process, not merely in the sense that the governments doing it was responsible to an electorate as wide as the whole adult population, but that the people themselves would participate actively both in the formulation of the plans and in their implementation. Thus, 'Democratic planning presupposes an overall unity of

[477] For a reaction at the time see Singer, H.W. 'India's Five Year Plan: A Modest Proposal', *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 21/10 (June 18, 1952), pp. 97 – 101.

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policy combined with proper diffusion of power and responsibility. In such planning, not only the Governments of States but also local self-governing bodies, such as municipalities, district and *taluka* boards and *panchayats*, and various functional organisations have to play a vital part. Measures to promote a healthy growth of such institutions, are, therefore an integral part of *democratic* planning (emphasis added)'.[478]

The publication of the Draft Outline provoked considerable public discussion, as it proclaimed was its intention. Between July 1951 and December 1951 when the final version of the First Five Year Plan was submitted by the Commission to the government, the Outline was examined in detail by the central ministries and the state governments, debated in parliament, in most of the state legislatures and in many district boards and municipal committees in addition to being widely commented on by the press. During this period Nehru was careful to emphasize the cautious approach of the plan for, 'it did not proceed on the basis of sweeping away the present economic and social structure of the country'.[479] It is significant that in his major speeches defending the Planning Commission and the first Five Year Plan in the legislative Nehru rarely used the term socialism, and if at all, then only to make the point that the plan was far from socialist.[480]

When the plan was debated in Parliament on 15 December 1952, it is interesting to note the number of amendments proposed to the government's resolution. One member criticized the Commission for 'over-expectation' and 'unwarranted optimism' and predicted that its misconceived effects would result in the 'disorganisation of the entire economic system'. Socialist-inspired amendments pointed to the Commission's failure to give

[478]A.H.Hanson, *The Process of Planning* (OUP, London, 1966) p. 91.
[479] Nehru, *Interim Lok Sabha Debates*, 15 October 1951, Col. 5044.
[480] See for example his speech in response to the Motion re. The Five Year Plan: *Interim LSD*, 15 Oct, 1951, Cols. 5039 – 5060.

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expression to the Directive Principles of the constitution and criticized the plan's 'reactionary 'industrial policy and demanded that the means of production, including land, should be nationalized.[481] Nehru's main contribution to the Lok Sabha debate did not consist of details on the planning process or envisioned outcomes, but rather his attempt to mediate by emphasizing the flexibility of the First Five-Year Plan. 'The method of planning' he explained, 'is ultimately the method of trial and error'.[482]

An important feature that distinguished the Indian machinery of planning compared with other developing countries, was the fact that in the Indian system, planning and budgeting were to be completely separated. The budget for both current and investment expenditure was the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance which also was to have complete control over all resources including external assistance. Thus, the system envisaged close cooperation between the Commission and the Finance Ministry and any differences were to be resolved through discussion between the Deputy Chairman and the Finance Minister, or by reference to the Cabinet. As a result, the system made the Planning Commission responsible for the longer term goals of development and medium-level investment planning; the Finance Ministry for raising the resources for investment and current expenditure, fiscal policy and expenditure control; and the Reserve Bank of India for monetary policy. This was a healthy approach considering there was always going to be a conflict between the requirements of long-term development and the need for short-term stabilisation but it also meant that cooperation between the three institutions depended heavily on the individuals in place.

[481] See discussions on Resolution re. Five Year Plan: *Lok Sabha Debates*,15 December, 1952.
[482] LSD, 1952, pt.2, vi, col. 2498.

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The responsibilities for sectoral planning, policy formulation and project selection were to be shared by the Commission with the planning divisions of each of the sectoral ministries. When planning was first undertaken in India, the decision to install the Prime Minister as Chairman of the Planning Commission had both a personal and an institutional significance. Jawaharlal Nehru had demonstrated a long-run consistency in prioritising planning as the main instrument for economic development. At the same time it was a tactical move, to enable him to exert control over the policy-making process through an un-elected institution. It is significant to note that throughout his years as Prime Minister and the many additional roles he adopted, Nehru did not relinquish his position as Chairman of the Planning Commission. In the long-run this set a precedent, ensuring that all subsequent prime ministers would occupy the Chairmanship.

5.5.2. The Second Five Year Plan:

'the adoption of the socialist pattern of society as the national objective'. [483]

By the time the second Five Year Plan was up for assessment, the 'grand debate' over planning had reached its peak intensity. Broadly speaking three positions had formed, ranging from the view that planning could act as an aid to capitalist development without property redistribution, as exemplified in the Bombay Plan, the Leftist argument that planning needed to be accompanied by State agency in the form of a radical redistribution of assets especially land and finally, the official view which envisioned a strong public sector, with the Planning Commission taking centre stage but without addressing seriously the goal of land redistribution.

[483] Contained in the Government of India Industrial Policy Resolution, 20th April, 1956.

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In its implementation the First Five Year Plan seemed to be a success, though critics alleged that this was due to good monsoons, a general worldwide post-war spurt in economic activity and the vigour of private enterprise. In any case, it is striking to note that national income increased by eighteen per cent rather than the eleven or twelve per cent that was initially expected. The capital-output ration worked out to 1.8:1 and food grains production increased by twenty per cent It was in a climate of optimism, generated by the success of the First Plan, that the Second Plan was formulated and the planners, aimed to give the economy a 'big push' as well as bringing about fundamental structural changes in the economy. The government now moved to assert itself as the independent variable in bringing about economic transformation. As a result the Second Plan came to resemble the model of planning implemented in the Soviet Union primarily in terms of the shift in favour of capital goods industries[484], adopting what came to be known as the "Feldman model".[485] The more proximate model of the Plan lay in the plan-frame developed by P.C.Mahalanobis, the head of the Indian Statistical Institute, submitted by him to the Indian Government on 17 March, 1955. In this model, the importance of the heavy or the capital-goods industries is derived from two basic assumptions. First, that capital goods installed in a particular sectors was specific to that sector and, therefore, non-shiftable and, secondly, working under the premise of a two-sector economy, it was argued that rather than attempt to increase savings, an investment in capital goods would enable a structural change in the economy.

By 1954 Mahalanobis had emerged as Prime Minister Nehru's chief economic adviser and in this capacity played a strategic and historic part in the formulation of the Second Plan.

[484] For views on this see: Baldev Raj Nayyar, *The Modernisation Imperative and Indian Planning* (Vikas Publishers, New Delhi, 1972), p. 39, A.H.Hanson, *The Process of Planning: A Study of India's Five Year Plans, 1950-64* (OUP, London, 1966), p.17, D.R.Gadgil, *Planning and Economic Policy in India* (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1965), p. 285.

[485] G.A.Feldman was an economist working for the Soviet Planning Agency.

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However, his association with Nehru dates back to the pre-independence period. They had known each other socially and had met at the house of Rabindranath Tagore, to whom Mahalanobis was related. In 1940 they first discussed intensively, issues relating to economic planning. In a memoir he writes, 'after the day's work was over, we started talking and after dinner we sat up till two in the morning'.[486] At the time Nehru was chairman of the National Planning Committee established by the Congress Party.

The theoretical foundation of the Second Plan written in March 1955, came to be published in an article.[487] The two chief aims of the Plan-frame were stated as (1) increasing the national income at the rate of five per cent annually, and (2) providing eleven million new jobs over the Plan period. The basic strategy was to give a major thrust to heavy industry and mines. As the Plan-frame noted, 'In the long run, the rate of industrialisation and the growth of the national economy would depend on the increasing production of coal, electricity, iron and steel, heavy machinery, heavy chemicals and the heavy industries generally which would increase the capacity for capital formation….'[488]

Apart from the parallels in content between the Second Plan and the Soviet model, there were also physical links. Near the end of 1953, at the request of Mahalanobis, Finance Minister C.D.Deshmukh provided funds for setting up an Operational Research Unit at the Indian Statistical Institute to begin studies on planning. Soon thereafter, this Research Unit began inviting economists and specialists from abroad for consultation. Significantly, these foreign experts were all Marxists or left-oriented economists. Among these was Professor

[486] P.C.Mahalanobis, *Talks on Planning* (London, Asia Publishing House, 1961), p. 3.
[487] P.C.Mahalanobis, 'The Approach of Operational Research to Planning in India', *Sankhya*, XVI (Dec, 1955), pp.3-62 and P.C.Mahalanobis, *The Approach of Operational Research in Planning in India* (London, Asia Publishing House, 1963).
[488] P.C.Mahalanobis, 'Draft Recommendations for the Formulation of the Second Five Year Plan, 1956-61', p. 31.

www.historymarg.com

Charles Bettelheim of France, Ragnar Frisch from Norway, Oskar Lange from Poland, Richard Goodwin from the UK, a team from the Soviet Union headed by D.D.Degtyar of Gosplan, the Soviet Planning agency.[489]

The Second Five Year Plan as a result moved away from the consensus-driven approach that had characterised the first plan and instead began to emphasise strongly its socialist character. Nehru's increasingly assertive statements echoed the radicalism of his early days as Congress President in the mid 1930s (see chapter four). For instance in November 1954 at a meeting of the National Development Council, Nehru gave expression to the kind of society he eventually envisioned for India. He rejected capitalism, stating that "a system which is based purely on the acquisitive instinct of society is immoral" and its days are over. He went on to say: "The picture I have in mind is definitely and absolutely a Socialistic picture of society. I am not using the word in a dogmatic sense at all. I mean largely that the means of production should be socially owned and controlled for the benefit of society as a whole. There is plenty of room for private enterprise there, provided the main aim is kept clear".[490] It is striking that despite the gap of twenty years, Nehru's publicly stated beliefs on the subject of planning and economic development had not changed very much. The statements he was issuing in the mid-1950s could have been pronouncements he had made as a young member of the Congress party in the early 1930s.

[489] On the views and recommendations of the various experts, see Oscar Lange, *Essays on Economic Planning* (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1960); Indian Statistical Institute, *Planning and Statistics in Socialist Countries* (London, Asia Publishing House, 1963); Charles Bettelheim, *Some Basic Planning Problems* (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1960); Ragnar Frisch, *Planning for India: Selected Explorations in Methodology*, (Asia Publishing House, New York, 1960).

[490] Jawaharlal Nehru: *Planning and Development: Speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru, 1952-56*, Delhi, Publications Divisions, p. 17.

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A month later, in December 1954 the Lok Sabha passed a resolution stating that the achievement of a 'socialistic pattern of society' was the objective of the economic policy of the government. This was further confirmed in January 1955 when, at the annual session of the Congress party held in Avadi, another resolution declared that, 'in order to realize the object of the Congress Constitution and to further the objectives stated in the Preamble and Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India, planning should take place with a view to the establishment of a socialistic pattern of society, where the principal means of production are under social ownership or control, production is speeded up and there is equitable distribution of the national income".[491] Later, in May 1955, the National Development Council directed that "the Second Five Year Plan should be drawn up so as to give concrete expression to policy decisions relating to the socialist pattern of society".[492] Gulzarilal Nanda, cabinet minister and later, Planning Minister explained, 'An economy based on the socialistic pattern does not preclude the existence of a private sector, particularly in agriculture and small-scale industry and commercial operations. It has, however to be brought into harmony with the public and private sectors….The leading principle in the case of the private sector should be not individual profit and control over resources but the service of the community accompanied by a certain emphasis on flexibility of organisation and adaptability to changing conditions….. In India we have conceived of the socialistic pattern of society as also incorporating two other ideas, namely, decentralization of power and initiative and the building-up of various social and economic institutions in such a way as to serve the interests of the small man and of the people of the villages'.[493]

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[491] Zaidi, A. (ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. 15 (Chand & Co. Ltd, New Delhi, 1980), p. 52.

[492] See *Second Five Year Plan*: 'Approach to the Second Five Year Plan' at the Planning Commission website: http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index9.html
Last seen on 9.09.2008

[493] Nanda, G. *Approach to the Second Five Year Plan. Some basic considerations*. (Hind Union Press, Delhi, 1955), p. 3.

www.historymarg.com

From three separate directions then – the economic technocrats at the Indian Statistical Institute and the Planning Commission, foreign economic advisers with their leftist orientation, and the top-level political elite with its recently affirmed socialist commitment – thinking on planning converged on the acceptance of an economic strategy patterned after the Soviet model, at least in its ambitious goals and sectoral priorities, if not entirely in its methods. This acceptance found its reflection in the Plan-frame and eventually without serious modification in the final Second Five-Year Plan. However, before the Second Plan was finally accepted, it went through a complex series of steps (1) the preparation of the Plan-frame in March 1955 (2) consideration and acceptance of the Plan-frame (a) in April 1955 by the Panel of Economists appointed by the Planning Commission and (b) by the National Development Council and its Standing Committee in May 1955; (3) consultation by the Planning Commission with state governments from July to December 1955; (4) the preparation of a Draft Memorandum on the Second Plan, and discussion on the Memorandum in the National Development Council and the Consultative Committee of the Members of Parliament in January 1956; (5) the publication of the Draft Outline of the Second Plan in February 1956 for public discussion and comment; (6) consideration and approval of the Draft Outline by the National Development Council and the Lok Sabha in May 1956; (7) preparation of the Draft Second Five Year Plan; (8) consideration and approval of the Draft Plan by the Lok Sabha in September 1956; and (9) publication of the Plan in November 1956.

The Plan as it finally emerged, differed from the first plan in important aspects. Firstly, the Second Plan was a need-based rather than a resource-based plan. Second, the particular strategy chosen for economic development did not provide for quick returns. There were not going to be immediate ‘pay-offs’ from the investment undertaken. The pride of place in the allocation for heavy industry went to iron and steel which for the planners held

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the highest priority since, more than any other industrial product, the levels of production of these materials were to determine the tempo of progress of the economy as a whole. Heavy industry projects however, have a long gestation period and therefore do not offer immediate returns either in terms of goods for consumption or profits for further investment. Equally, the high capital intensity of the investment involved was likely to aggravate an already difficult unemployment situation. Corresponding with the heavy emphasis on industry there was reduced emphasis on agriculture. This was less in the formal commitment to the importance of agriculture than in the allocation of funds in the Plan. In the First Plan the allocation for agriculture and community development was 15.1 per cent of the total Plan outlay, but this came down to 11.8 per cent in the Second Plan, while that for irrigation and flood control was reduced from 17.0 per cent to 10.1 per cent.

Furthermore, with the Second Plan the government undertook the execution of enterprises and tasks for which it was not adequately equipped. On the one hand, neither the government, nor for that matter the country, possessed in adequate measure the modern technological and scientific skills necessary in the new branches of economic activity. On the other hand, the government was equally poorly equipped from the viewpoint of organisational and managerial resources, given the large-scale expansion contemplated for the public sectors. Equally overwhelming tasks were being assumed in the realm of cottage industries and agrarian reforms, for which the leadership had neither the will nor the organisational ability. More generally, in relations to government capabilities in the execution of a tightly integrated plan such as the Second Plan, there remained questions as to the extent to which the central government could persuade the private sector in a mixed economy, and the states in a federal system, to do its bidding, and in the event of failure, as to the likely

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distortions that would result in the economy. All this meant that a lot of responsibility and authority was bestowed upon the Planning Commission.

Questions about the economic strategy proposed for the Second Plan and its implications for society and politics were first raised when the Plan was put to a Panel of Economists in April 1955, consisting of twenty one eminent experts, with Finance Minister, Deshmukh as chairman. Whilst reservations and implicit warnings were voiced by a number of the panellists there was only one who questioned the whole basis of the Plan-frame, its assumptions and the size. In a vigorous note of dissent, Professor B.R.Shenoy warned of the risks involved in the Mahalanobis strategy.[494] He termed the plan-frame "over-ambitious", strongly opposed deficit-financing in the magnitude suggested by the plan and asked that the Plan should fit the resources of the country. As he pointed out, 'the inability of the Plan-frame to place more than about seventy five per cent of the resources required for the Plan under the usual sources and the reliance on deficit-financing for the rest is broad evidence that the size of the Plan far exceeds the available savings."[495]

Shenoy underscored the basic incompatibility between the economic strategy incorporated in the Plan-frame and the political framework adopted by India, and pointed to the possible socially explosive consequences.[496] He was insistent that the Plan should stay within the bounds of available resources and, to remain consistent with individual freedom and democratic institution, should not impose forced savings on the population. He asked for the plan to move in line with the available savings in the economy, urged the removal of

[494] Shenoy,B.R. "The Second Five Year Plan: A Note of Dissent on the Basic Considerations Relating to the Plan Frame" in Planning Commission, *Papers Relating to the Formulation of the Second Five Year Plan*, pp. 15 – 26.
[495] Ibid. p.160 – 1.
[496] Ibid. p.18.

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remaining physical controls and opposed the extension of nationalisation. The fact that the Panel of Economists (appointed by the Planning Commission) was otherwise unanimous in their support for the plan is suggestive of a 'yes-man' culture that had emerged by the mid-1950s within the advisory circles surrounding Nehru.

Voices of dissent outside this inner core however, continued to warn against the dangers of financing a plan through higher taxation and the reliance on cottage-industries for consumer goods production. At the meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Development Council in July 1955, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Dr. B.C.Roy strongly attacked the Plan arguing that investment in heavy industry would lead to no substantial increase in employment. He was sceptical about the people extending support to a Plan that was not beneficial to them and criticised the overly top-down approach. Roy even voiced his opposition to the idea of physical controls on the private sector for these could not be implemented "unless there was totalitarianism".[497]

In February 1956, the Draft Plan of the Second Five Year Plan was published, and this also came under criticism. The most noteworthy aspect of this criticism was what came to be known as the 'Neogy Dissent' – a note of dissent on the Draft Plan submitted by K.C.Neogy, a member of the Planning Commission. In his view the Plan was "unrealistic and over-ambitious, and its massive superstructure has been raised on precarious foundations."[498] Nonetheless, the National Development Council approved the Draft Plan.

[497] India, Planning Commission, *Third Meeting of the National Development Council: Summary Record*, New Delhi, July 1955, p. 5.
[498] India, Planning Commission, *Seventh Meeting of the National Development Council : Summary Record*, New Delhi, May 1956.

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As the Lok Sabha took up the Draft Outline for discussion in May 1956 and the final Plan in September 1956, there was criticism from Communist MPs that it did not conform to the original Plan-frame and there were critics of the basic strategy and of any attempt to push the Plan closer to the Plan-frame. Several members worried about the dangers of deficit financing and significantly, even the World Bank was of the opinion that the Plan was over-ambitious.[499] Singling out for special consideration the criticisms of the Plan and the warnings given to the government if it proceeded with the Plan, places out of focus the reception given to the Plan at the various stages of its formulation. The majority of the economists and planners and most of the political leaders favoured the strategy and the size of the Plan, notwithstanding their reservations on particular aspects of the Plan. A discussion of the criticisms and warnings does however, have the merit of bringing out the fact that the government proceeded with the Plan fully cognizant of the risks it was undertaking. It is also significant to note that within a year of implementing the Second Five Year Plan all the strains that were feared came to the fore; increased dependence on foreign aid, stringent controls on foreign exchange transactions, a rise in prices, failure to meet the food production and employment targets.

5.6. Analysing the *political* origins of planning in India.

The goals of economic planning in India are generally held to have been pre-eminently welfare goals. The First Plan paid homage to the welfare and egalitarian goals embodied in the Directive Principles of State Policy which are a part of the Indian Constitution. The welfare aims of the approach underlying the First Plan are obvious from the

[499] Hanson & Malenbaum: *Prospects for Indian Development* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1962), p.144.

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declaration that the "central objective of planning in India at the present stage is to initiate a process of development which will raise living standards and open out to the people new opportunities for a richer and more varied life".[500] Such aims are often generalised beyond the First Plan to India's entire planning experience. As part of this objective, it was planned to double per capita income within thirty years but the investment programme envisaged in the Plan was a modest one. No large-scale programme for industrialisation or for modernisation of the economy was apparent. It was with the Second Plan that a large-scale industrialisation effort was launched with an emphasis on heavy industry and it is here that the planning goals call for an investigation.

The Second Plan re-emphasized the welfare goals of the First Plan, now cast under the umbrella term, the 'socialist pattern of society', by declaring its objectives, apart from 'rapid industrialisation with particular emphasis on the development of basic and heavy industries,' to be, the raising of living standards through a considerable increase in national income, expansion of employment opportunities, and reduction of economic inequalities, and a wider distribution of economic power. However, unlike in the First Plan, welfare objectives were not simply an end in themselves but instead were to become part of a greater project with ends such as modernisation and industrialisation. Hence, the Second Plan's explanation that, "Low or static standards of living, underemployment and unemployment, and to a certain extent even a gap between the average incomes and the highest incomes are all manifestations of the basic underdevelopment which characterizes an economy depending mainly on agriculture. Rapid industrialisation and diversification of the economy is thus the core of development. But if industrialisation is to be rapid enough, the county must aim at

[500] *First Five Year Plan*, Chapter One: 'Planning: Economic and Social Aspects', available on Planning Commission official website: http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index9.html
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www.historymarg.com

developing basic industries which make machines, to make the machines needed for future development. This calls for substantial expansion in iron and steel, ferrous non-metals, coal, cement, heavy chemicals and other industries of basic importance".[501]

This then laid the basis for a *political* commitment to economic strategy, one that aimed and promised to result in self-reliance. During the course of the Third Plan it was the term *self-reliance* that came into increasing usage and the Draft Outline of the Fourth Plan made it the first of eight principal tasks.[502] The humanitarian and welfare aspects of Nehru's views on economic planning are taken for granted: his deep-rooted and earnest concern for the removal of poverty, his passion for economic progress, his commitment to egalitarian goals and social justice, his suspicions of the profit motive and the spirit of acquisitiveness and competitive violence associated with both, his aversion to capitalism and his conviction that socialism was the ideal social and economic system.[503] However, if the record is examined more closely, it becomes apparent that economic achievements were also to serve the grander schemes of attaining economic independence, preserving political freedom, gaining military securing and enhancing national power. Hence for Nehru, just like in the cases of the Hindu Code Bills and Panchasheela, the setting up of the Planning Commission and the adoption of planning and a socialistic pattern as the country's development strategy was inherently linked to the overall project of nation-building and state-consolidation. However, it is noteworthy that this linkage was widely promulgated only once Nehru had managed to establish a position of authority and legitimacy for himself.

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[501] See *Second Five Year Plan*: 'Approach to the Second Five Year Plan' at the Planning Commission website: http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index9.html
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[502] *Fourth Five Year Plan: Preface* at the Planning Commission website: http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/index9.html
Last seen on 9.09.2008

[503] For more details see Chapter 3 on Nehru's worldview.

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The connection between the economic strategy and national independence in Nehru's thinking is evident in the inception of the heavy industry strategy for the Second Plan. At that very meeting of the National Development Council in 1954 where Nehru articulated his picture of the socialistic society and where he advocated the heavy industry strategy, he also recognised the strategy's contribution to national independence. He admitted that heavy industry would contribute little to employment, and that to solve the unemployment problem through heavy industry would require "an investment running into astronomical figures. And yet it is essential for us to have many industries, for we cannot build up a sound economy and be independent of other countries without developing a good number of heavy industries".[504] Nehru repeated the message a month later in the Lok Sabha. "Real progress must ultimately depend on industrialisation", he said and continued, "industrialisation ultimately depends on heavy industries. Even to preserve our national independence, and, much more, to raise our standards of living, heavy industries are essential".[505] At the Avadi session of the Congress party, where the resolution on the 'socialistic pattern' was passed he emphasized, "We want heavy industry because without it we can never really be an independent country".[506]

Most revealing in respect of the linkage between heavy industry and the protection of the country's independence in Nehru's thinking is a lengthy discourse by him before the Lok Sabha on precisely this subject in 1956. Interestingly the subject under discussion was not planning but defence and Nehru was trying to answer criticism regarding India's defence preparedness in the context of American military aid to Pakistan. He acknowledged that India was not adequately prepared for modern warfare, but went on to ask: "What is the equation of

[504] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Planning and Development: Speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru 1952-56*, p. 18.
[505] Speech in Lok Sabha, 21 December 1954 in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Volume Three: March 1953-August 1957*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Delhi: The Publications Division, 1958), p. 11.
[506] Address at the 60th session of the Indian National Congress at Avadi, 22 January 1955, in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Volume Three: March 1953-August 1957*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Delhi: The Publications Division, 1958), p. 19.

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defence? In what lies the strength of a people for defence? Well, one thinks immediately about defence forces – army, navy, air force. Perfectly right. They are the spear points of defence. They have to bear the brunt of any attack. How do they exist? What are they based on? The more technical armies and navies and air forces get, the more important becomes the industrial and technological base of the country".[507]

Elaborating on this point, "The real strength of a country develops by industrial growth which implies the capacity to make weapons of war for the army, navy or the air force".[508] To critics who wanted Five Year Plans put aside so that there could be immediate concentration on defence, Nehru retorted: 'But the Five Year Plan is the defence plan of the country. What else is it? Because defence does not consist in people going about marching up and down the road with guns and other weapons. Defence consists today in a country being industrially prepared for producing the goods and equipment of defence.[509]

The absolute centrality of heavy industry for the country's independence was emphasized in the discussions about the Second Plan as well. At a meeting of the National Development Council, when it considered the draft of the Second Five Year Plan, Nehru stated on 1 May 1956, that the decision for the rapid industrialisation of the country had been made 'because we feel that without the growth of industry there can be no real progress from the point of view of our country's being able to preserve its freedom".[510] Even after the Sino-Indian crisis of 1962, at a special meeting of the National Development Council, convened to consider a possible reorientation of development plans, Nehru had little patience with those

[507] Speech during debate on Demands of the Ministry of Finance, *Lok Sabha 21 March, 1956*, in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Volume Three: March 1953-August 1957*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Delhi: The Publications Division, 1958), pp. 39 – 40.
[508] *Lok Sabha Debates*, 21 March 1956 pp .41 – 2.
[509] *Lok Sabha Debates*, 21 March 1956 pp. 41 – 2.
[510] Nehru, *Planning and Development*, p. 50.

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who advised suspending the Third Plan because of the defence emergency. By making this link between defence and planning Nehru had found a way to add to the weight and importance of planning as the instrument of economic development as well as a mechanism through which to set the priorities of policy. In effect, Nehru inter-locked India's defence outlook with the demands of the planned economy and, in the process, argued that the country's defences depended not so much on the evaluations of its generals and national security experts, but rather on the planners running the economy. As a tactical move to dispel criticism this may have strengthened Nehru's vision of 'the commanding heights of the economy' to be the purview of heavy industry but, in the longer-run, it meant that debate on the country's strategic constraints and options were eclipsed.

Since the founding of the Swatantra Party in 1959[511], the heavy industry strategy of the government had come under severe attack from the party's spokesman, Minoo Masani, who advocated a strategy more oriented towards agriculture and consumer goods. The Sino-Indian border crisis and the damage it did to government authority brought on a motion of no-confidence against the government in August 1963. Nehru responded to Minoo Masani. 'It is essential if you want industrialisation, as we want it, to have a base, an industrial base. Apart from pure industrialisation, it is essential for our strength, for our military strength, defence strength to have an industrial base….I say you cannot even remain free in India without an industrial base'.[512]

[511] Swatantra was formed by a senior, former freedom fighter and member of the Congress party, C.Rajagopalachari who was one of the few South Indian leaders to attain nation-wide prominence. The Swatantra Party was meant to be the liberal alternative, advocating a pro-US foreign policy and de-control of the economy. In the 1962 elections the Swatantra Party secured the third largest number of Lok Sabha seats. See Erdman, H.L. 'India's Swatantra Party', *Public Affairs*, Vol. 36 / 4, Winter 1963-64, pp. 394 – 410.
[512] *Lok Sabha Debates*, Third Series, vol.19 (22 August 1963), cols. 2197 – 8.

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Continuing, Nehru underlined his concern for economic independence, 'We want real freedom. Real freedom is not merely political freedom; it is economic freedom in two senses. One in the sense that you do not have to rely on other countries. You are friends with them, you co-operate with them, you take their help, but you are not dependent upon them to carry on either for defence or anything else. And the second economic freedom I mean is economic freedom for the vast masses of our country, that is their having higher standards of living, leading a good life not only physically, materially, but culturally and otherwise, and putting an end, as far as possible, in stages if you like, to these gross differences that exist in India, which are not good for any country from any point of view'.[513]

Earlier in 1963, in a speech to the Standing Committee of the National Development Council, he explained the need to take a longer view for the country's future, 'As for the development plans, they were and are meant to raise the standard of living of our people, but they are also meant essentially to strengthen the nation altogether. It is not real strength for us to get arms or aeroplanes from abroad although that becomes very necessary in a crisis. The real strength comes from our relying largely on our production, on our own resources. In fact, you know that the big and powerful countries of the world are the countries which have industrialised themselves and thereby gained strength, whether for war or for peaceful progress. Real strength therefore comes from industrialisation from modern techniques, whether they apply to agriculture or industry. The real test of strength is how much steel you produce, how much power you produce and use'.[514]

In the early days, during the formulation of the First Plan and in the course of the First Plan's operation, the link between heavy industry and national independence had been

[513] *Lok Sabha Debates*, Third Series, vol. 19 (22 August, 1963), cols. 2197 – 8.
[514] *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches: Volume Four*, p. 161.

www.historymarg.com

present in Nehru's mind. Speaking in March 1952 at the annual session of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, Nehru had cautioned against excessive dependence on foreign aid and reminded his audience of the virtues of self-sufficiency: 'I say that it is better that we go slow, but depend on our own resources, rather than take up grand schemes which make us lean on others. I would go further and say that we should follow this principle of self-sufficiency and self-help even in the matters of arms and armaments. I am in favour of depending on arms made in India rather than import from abroad, whatever their excellences'.[515] However, these kinds of statements were rare and it was only with the Second Five Year Plan that the argument of self-sufficiency was explicitly linked with the need for a socialist approach.

More common at the time of the First Plan was the following statement made in the Lok Sabha towards the end of 1952 in which Nehru made no reference to the role of the State and did not speak of a need to curtail private enterprise so as not to alarm big business and capitalist interests. At the same time to appease the Gandhian following, Nehru did not dismiss the importance of cottage industries. Instead he claimed, 'I have no doubt at all that without the development of major industry in this country, we cannot raise our levels of existence. In fact, I will go further: We cannot remain a free country because certain things are essential to freedom; Defence – leave out other things – which if we do not have, we cannot remain a free country. Therefore, we have to develop industry in that major way, but always remembering that all the development of industry in that major way does not by itself solve the problem of the hundreds of millions of this country and we have to increase the smaller village industry and cottage industry in a big way also'.[516]

[515] Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting*, New Delhi 29 -30 March, 1952, pp. 35 – 6.
[516] *Lok Sabha Debates*, vol. VI, no. 10, part II (December 1952) col. 2371.

www.historymarg.com

The important point to emerge is that in the case of economic policy, the shifting of substantive parameters came *after* the establishment of policy instruments and the setting up of an institutional framework. This is reflective of the fact that in the field of economic policy, Nehru did not have a free hand. Due to the structure of opportunities as determined by the competing groups of interests and the rivalry with Sardar Patel, Nehru was compelled to adopt a more moderate position. Additionally, given that his thinking and pre-independence writing on economic policy had reflected a tendency towards pragmatism and expediency, it was not as intellectually anathema to him to make the strategic compromises necessary. This attitude, as will be seen in the following chapters, differed in the cases of foreign policy and the reforming of Hindu law.

5.7. Conclusion: the Planning Commission as a repository of values.

Given the relatively dense arrangement of institutions that existed at the time of independence to represent the interests of various actors such as the state, the business community and labour, Nehru's actions were more tightly constrained than in the other policy areas (as will be seen in subsequent chapters). As a result, the outcome of his preferences, seen in terms of the Planning Commission and the first two five year plans, reflected a complex process of bargaining and accommodation. This could have given rise to 'empty' rhetoric and a powerless, pointless institution. However, because Nehru's own preferences in terms of goals and policy and vision of India's economic development were quite clearly conceptualised, the institution of the Planning Commission emerged not only as political *instrument* but also as a repository of *values* guiding India's economic development.

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Regardless of whether the choice of economic policy was sub-optimal in the long-run, the point is that the Planning Commission emerged as an enduring institution that has played a role in the policy-making process. Chibber argues that India's path of development is representative of the phenomenon where inefficiencies are locked into place and which become difficult to change and remove over time. However, at the same time it is remarkable that despite concerted attempts to liberalise and *alter* the system, already in the 1960s and then through the 1970s and 80s and finally reaching the full-blown liberalisation process of the 1990s, the Planning Commission survived as an institution, adapting and altering its role according to the times. This observation will be further examined in the final chapter 8 where a comparison is drawn across the three policy areas and the institutions that each generated.

The following table summarises the key phases in the processes of establishing the Planning Commission, launching the first Five Year Plan and re-casting in the second Plan. Each phase is contextualised in terms of the 'structure of opportunities' under which Nehru was operating, in other words, the objections and alternatives voiced by other leaders and institutions and his own position of power within the Congress party and in parliament.

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Table 5: Phases in the process towards planning

PHASE	STRUCTURE OF OPPORTUNITIES	STRATEGY / OUTCOME
1930s *Debate within Congress* 1934 CSP formed 1936 Nehru: Congress President 1938 Bose: Congress President	General scepticism about state intervention. Gandhian approach of cottage industry, village-based economy more dominant. Nehru working his way up within Congress.	1938 National Planning Committee: broad-based membership of industrialists, financiers, economists, academics, Gandhians, representatives of Trade Union Congress. Nehru' statements: the need to combine large-scale planning with village focus and cottage industries.
1940-45 *War and Post-war years: Turn towards Planning* Board of Industrial & Scientific Research Reconstruction Committee 1944-46 Planning & Development Department 1945 Industrial Policy Statement	Competition between Plans: 1944 Bombay Plan 1944 People's Plan 1944 Gandhian Plan 1946 Interim Government set up Advisory Planning Board. Emergence of All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC). Nehru in jail.	Advisory Planning Board tried to please both labour and capital lobbies.
1947 - 50 *Independence & Planning* 1947 Economic Programme Committee of Congress 1948 exit of Congress Socialists from INC	Criticism of government by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Indian Merchants Chamber (IMC), the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Associated Chambers of Commerce (ASSOCHAM), and the Madras Chamber of Commerce. Nehru leading interim government.	1948 Independent government issued Industrial Policy Statement rejecting nationalisation. 1950 Setting up of Planning Commission: broad-based membership.
1950 - 1954 *Teething troubles*	Criticism of Planning Commission Resignation of Finance Minister Nehru faces challenges within Congress	1951 – 1956 Moderate First Five Year Plan Highly limited functions of Planning Commission.
Mid-1950s *Turn towards Socialism*	1950 Death of Patel 1954 Mahalanobis is Nehru's economic adviser Nehru unchallenged within INC and in parliament	1956 – 1961 Second Five Year Plan: focus on heavy industry / increased government control over industry. 'Socialistic Pattern of Society' resolution.

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What can be seen from the above study is that in the process of articulating a vision for India's economic development, Nehru followed a successful set of strategies which included (a) toning down his radicalism in order to occupy centre space within the Congress party, (b) demonstrating his willingness to compromise and build a consensus on economic policy in the years before and after independence (c) consolidating his power through the Congress Working Committee and the Prime Minister's cabinet (d) the setting up of an institution through which to influence policy implementation directly and, once all this had been achieved (e) he invoked his vision of a 'socialistic pattern of society'. This sequence varied in other cases considered in the following chapters due to the different structure of opportunities and cost-benefit conditions facing Nehru. As has been demonstrated in this chapter, the costs of proclaiming socialism as the creed guiding economic development for India were too high in the 1930s and in the early years after independence, when Nehru had yet to consolidate his power and sideline the alternatives being voiced. Born under these constraints and compulsions it is posited, in chapter eight, that the Planning Commission emerged primarily as an instrument of power and less as an institution embodying a particular set of ideals. As a result, it has been able to survive ideological shifts in the arena of economic policy-making.

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Chapter Six

The Panchasheela Agreement.

6.1. Introduction: the Puzzle.

6.2. Pre-history: British India's foreign policy.

6.3. Nehru on foreign affairs: the Constituent Assembly Debates

6.4. The discourse on foreign policy: alternatives to and critics of Nehru.

6.5. The Panchasheela Agreement: an analytic narrative of institutions, functions and constraints.

6.6. The Implications of Panchasheela.

6.7. Analysing the Origins of the Panchasheela Agreement.

6.7.1. K.M.Panikkar

6.7.2. T.N.Kaul

6.7.3. Krishna Menon

6.8. Conclusion: Vision and Strategy in the Panchasheela Agreement.

6.1. The Puzzle

This chapter examines a second case of policy-making under Nehru: the signing of the Panchasheela Agreement. It explores the sequence of strategies employed and analyses the variation in tactics and manoeuvres compared with those used to institute planning as the stratagem for India's economic development. Signed on 29th April 1954, the Panchasheela

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Agreement was at the time hailed as a major foreign policy achievement for India. In Nehru's words:

"India does not propose to join any camp or alliance. But we wish to cooperate with all in the quest for peace and security and human brotherhood…..Peaceful coexistence is not a new idea for us in India. It has been our way of life and is as old as our thought and culture…..From this it has naturally followed that we should keep ourselves free from military and like alliances and have not joined any of the great power groups that dominate the world today. It is in no spirit of pride or arrogance that we pursue our independent policy. We should not do otherwise unless we were false to everything India has stood for in the past and stands for today. We welcome association and friendship with all and the flow of thought and ideas of all kinds, but we reserve the right to choose our own path. That is the essence of *Panchsheel* ".[517]

During the years leading up to independence Jawaharlal Nehru is usually portrayed as one of the few leaders with an interest in foreign affairs and international politics. His travels abroad and engagement with international causes like the Sino-Japanese war, the Spanish civil war and the anti-colonial movement (Brussels conference) established him as the expert in foreign policy. It is certainly the case that Nehru wrote extensively on international issues in the form of articles and books in which he often revealed a concern for global problems. The perception of India abroad and the country's potential to be a major player in the international arena were also repeated themes in Nehru's analyses although the envisioned instruments of India's foreign policy remained vague. Contrary to common thinking however, Nehru was not the sole source of thinking on foreign affairs and the only formulator of options that were open to India. Both during the freedom struggle as well as after

[517] *Panchsheel*, The Publications Division, (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GOI, July 1957), p. 13.

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independence, alternative views were being voiced but these have been ignored in the literature since, by and large, these failed to be incorporated into the early phase of independent India's foreign policy.

The policy towards China in particular generated heated discussions, both in terms of India's bilateral relations with its unpredictable and relatively unknown neighbour, the newly established communist People's Republic of China, as well as raising questions about the general principles underlying India's foreign policy. As a result, the Panchasheela Agreement serves to concentrate the debate on India's China policy and India's international strategy of non-alignment, providing a useful prism through which to explore the rationale behind India's foreign policy choices in the early 1950s. The Panchasheela Agreement is a crucial point in recent Indian history because it officially endorsed India's recognition of Tibet being a part of China and as a result, what had been Tibet-India borders became China-India borders for the first time.[518] What is curious about the agreement is why Nehru went ahead with it despite there being a substantial amount of scepticism and objection voiced in parliament and secondly, why Nehru felt it necessary to be conciliatory towards China when India was under no immediate pressure to do so.

These questions have not been answered in the existing literature. In fact the existing material on Nehru's foreign policy is surprisingly thin given that he was hailed and continues to be seen as the progenitor of modern Indian foreign policy. Various publications are available which simply describe the international context at the time and the various foreign

[518] For a copy of the agreement see Mehra, P. *The North-Eastern Frontier. A Documentary Study of the Internecine Rivalry between India, Tibet and China*. Volume 2 (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1980), pp. 165 – 171.

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policy challenges India faced.[519] Furthermore, while Nehru's contribution to the policy of Non-Alignment is a popular topic it has not generated analytical works.[520] This is particularly the case with regards Panchasheela, about which for a long time there was only one book in English that examined the Agreement and its repercussions: *Born in Sin: The Panchsheel Agreement, the Sacrifice of Tibet* by the French scholar, Claude Arpi.[521] However, like Neville Maxwell's infamous *India's China War*[522], Arpi's book is highly polemical and considered to have been heavily biased. In Arpi's case the book is seen as leaning heavily against the Chinese whilst in Maxwell's case, he was regarded as having been far too critical of India.

In 2004, to commemorate the fifty years anniversary of the agreement, a retrospective volume of collected articles edited by former ambassador, C.V. Ranganathan was published under the title, *Panchsheel and the Future. Perspectives on India-China Relations.*[523] Whilst interesting as material through which to assess the ongoing relevance and symbolic value of Panchasheela the contributions to these volumes are uniformly uncritical, providing little insight into the motivations and politics behind the agreement of 1954. Another example is that of the respected India scholar, Rothermund who points out the inherent problems with Nehru's China policy in a succinct paragraph:

'Nehru relied on the anti-imperialism of the Chinese revolutionaries. When they occupied Tibet in 1950, he did not object and immediately ceded the extra-territorial rights in Tibet. In 1954 India and China concluded a border treaty which unfortunately did not specify the

[519] Singh, I. *Between two fires: towards an understanding of Jawaharlal Nehru's foreign policy*. (Sangam Books, London, 1998), Nizami, T.A. (ed.) *Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of India's foreign policy*. (Icon Publishers, New Delhi, 2006).

[520] For a representative text see: Bajpai, U.S. (ed.) *Non-Alignment. Perspectives and Prospects* (Lancers Publishers, New Delhi, 1983).

[521] Published in 2004 by Mittal Publications, New Delhi.

[522] Published in 1970 by Jaico Publishing House, Bombay Maxwell's book was initially banned in India.

[523] Published by Samskriti, New Delhi.

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border but only mentioned some passes open for trade between India and Tibet. The treaty also included the five principles (Panchasheela) of peaceful coexistence which Nehru repeatedly emphasized in subsequent years but which did not mean anything to the Chinese'. [524] However, his analysis does not go on to explore the reasons behind Nehru's fallacies, leaving the reader instead to speculate about Nehru's intentions and capabilities.

This chapter begins with a pre-history to India's foreign policy options and priorities as moulded by the experience of being a British colony. The subject of India's borders is intimately linked to the colonial period, given that Britain maintained a strict control over defence policy and was, in fact, responsible for the treaties to which India refers to in claiming its modern-day frontiers. This is followed by a quick summary of Nehru's insights on India's foreign policy, the instruments and goals and the priorities that would set India apart from other nations and the prevailing norms of realpolitik (see chapter three for details). His position as revealed in the Constituent Assembly Debates is examined to identify whether there was any change from his pre-independence writings.

Given that Nehru chose to associate himself so closely and intimately with the making and implementation of Indian foreign policy, the controversy surrounding his China policy makes for an ideal window into the discussions of the time. Using an analytic narrative, the various stages of policy-formulation, articulation, debate and implementation are examined, with the 1954 agreement acting as the culminating policy outcome. By following the sequence of events, exploring the alternatives that were voiced and rejected whilst keeping in mind the particular domestic political context (as depicted in chapter four), a case is made that Panchasheela took shape as a politically expedient choice aimed at disarming critics at

[524] Rothermund, D. *The role of the state in South Asia and other essays*. (Manohar, New Delhi, 2000), p. 102.

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home and sceptics abroad. Like with the Planning Commission, the *political* origins of Panchasheela are explored and the argument is made that while the 'visionary' element was certainly present, this was overshadowed by the political gain Nehru hoped to achieve as a result of his foreign policy 'coup'.

A concluding section argues that Nehru misjudged the Chinese. This was both a result of misinformation and bad advice at home from close advisors that Nehru chose to surround himself with as well as a deliberate effort by the Chinese to mislead.[525] Leaving Chinese motivations aside the point still holds that Nehru *chose* to ignore warnings, objections and cautionary advice from across the political spectrum in order to sign a document which entailed no material gains for India. In the case of Panchasheela Nehru's strategy consisted of steamrolling his way forward in the face of opposition and calls for prudence and a concerted attempt to turn panchasheela and India's relations with China at large, into a *non-issue* within parliamentary discussions. Ex post facto he justified his decision as part of India's new way of diplomacy. Unlike the Planning Commission, which took shape as part of a process of consensus-driven politics, Panchasheela emerged as a highly personal choice on Nehru's part, serving to boost his international persona and to prove his unchallenged position on international affairs at home. In the concluding chapter eight of the thesis, the proposition is considered that, having set such a precedent, subsequent foreign policy making suffered from a highly under-institutionalised framework.

[525] See Ranganathan, C.V. *India and China. The Way Ahead after Mao's India War*. (Har-Anand, New Delhi, 2000).

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6.2. Pre-history: British India's foreign policy.

Today India claims the McMahon Line to be its international border with China. This is a line that dates back to the 1914 Simla agreement brokered by the British which calls for a brief historical background since the legacy India inherited with regards the India-Tibet/China border was a particularly complicated one. The rise of Britain and Russia as colonial powers at the beginning of the nineteenth century coincided with the decline of China and as a result Tibet took on strategic relevance in the Anglo-Russian rivalry, known then as 'The Great Game'. Seeking to contain Russian influence in the region and establish a British presence, army officer Francis Younghusband led a British expedition in 1903-04 to Tibet. Finding the Chinese unwilling to negotiate, since for them the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 was still valid in which the British Government had implicitly recognised China's right to speak for, and on behalf of Tibet, and when no resistance was met, Younghusband marched on to Lhasa. The Anglo-Tibetan Agreement of 1904 was eventually extracted but, it was a treaty to which neither the Chinese nor the actual Dalai Lama at the time was party to and was signed instead by the acting regent. The treaty allowed the British to trade in Yadong, Gyantse and Gartok, called for Tibet to pay a large indemnity, formally recognised the Sikkim-Tibet border and declared Tibet to be a British protectorate. By 1906 the terms of the treaty had been re-negotiated and more ambiguity was injected into the status of Tibet with the privileged position accrued to Britain under the 1904 agreement appearing to be surrendered and China recognised as having supremacy over the Tibetan Government.[526]

[526] See Mehra, P. *The McMahon Line and After*. (Macmillan, Delhi, 1974) for a good overview of the history of Sino-British-Tibetan relations.

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The October 1911 Revolution which led to the downfall of the imperial Qing Dynasty and to the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912 exposed the country's weakness, leading to a gradual erosion of Peking's authority over large parts of western China including Mongolia, Sichuan and eventually Tibet. Taking advantage of the turmoil and Tibet's attempt to reassert its independence from China, the British restarted direct negotiations with the Tibetan Government which resulted in the Simla Conference of 1913 where Tibet, China and British interests were to be represented. For the British, Sir Arthur Henry McMahon was the representative. He was then Foreign Secretary of the Indian Government and brought to the negotiating table a long experience in boundary-making. It was at this conference that the crucial play on words was introduced, the agreement referring to Tibet's status as being 'under the *suzerainty* but not the *sovereignty*' (italics added) of China. As Mehra explains in his excellent book, *The McMahon Line and After*, this sought to impose a legalistic rigidity onto what had essentially been an elastic, flexible relationship between the Chinese emperor and the Dalai Lama. The other area of long-lasting controversy pertained to the delimitation of the India-Tibet boundary which ultimately gave rise to the famed McMahon line and which remained shrouded in legal uncertainty throughout the 1920s and 30s given that it was a part of the Simla Convention to which the Chinese ultimately had *not* been a party.

The issue of borders took on urgent relevance in 1935 when, under India's new constitution, it became necessary to define the tribal areas in the North-East in order to place them under the control of the government of Assam. The impending separation of Burma from the rest of British India made the definition of borders all the more imperative. A clash of interests however, was emerging at the time between the India Office and Whitehall which appeared less than enthusiastic to publish any maps for fear of antagonising the Chinese and

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losing their trading privileges.[527] World War Two was an additional complication given that China was an important bulwark against the Japanese onslaught that threatened British India and British interests in South East Asia. By the time of India's independence the exact status of Tibet and the Indo-Tibetan border remained beset by ambiguity. This point was driven home at the 1947 Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, convened by Jawaharlal Nehru, to which the Tibetans made a point of attending as a distinct group separate from the Chinese with their own independent flag.

In addition to the preoccupations at home and the overwhelming logistics and trauma of the partition which divided British India into the two separate nations of Pakistan and India, New Delhi at the time of independence had to cope with Tibetan as well as Chinese encroachments along its eastern frontier. In Tawang for instance, south of the McMahon line and the seat of an important lamaist monastery, a struggle was underway between Tibet and the Assam government to establish authority for example in the form of tax collection. However, both Whitehall and later New Delhi seem to have had their hands tied, unwilling to negotiate directly with the Tibetans for fear of upsetting Peking.

On October 1st, 1949 the new People's Republic of China was proclaimed, bringing an end to more than two decades of civil war and driving out the Kuomintang regime under Chiang Kai-Shek from the mainland to Taiwan whilst the Communists took charge in Beijing. Not long after taking control, the Communists proclaimed as a central objective, the 'liberation' of Tibet from the alleged intrigues and interferences of western imperialists and on October 7th, 1950 the People's Liberation Army marched into Tibet.

[527] See Mehra, P. *The McMahon Line and After*. (Macmillan, Delhi, 1974), Chapters 35 – 39.

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6.3. Nehru on Foreign Affairs: The Constituent Assembly Debates.

The linkage between foreign policy and nation-building was strongly advocated by Nehru and is a theme that became increasingly prevalent in his speeches on foreign policy in the run-up to and after independence. In a speech to the Constituent Assembly in December 1947, Nehru clearly stated that 'Ultimately foreign policy is the outcome of economic policy, and till that time, when India has properly evolved her economic policy, her foreign policy will be rather vague, rather inchoate, and will grope about.'[528] This link drawn between the economy and foreign policy was to persist and explains to some extent India's policy of non-alignment which also consisted of receiving economic aid from both blocs, sometimes at the same time.[529]

What is noteworthy is how little the topic of non-alignment came up for discussion in the Constituent Assembly for there are comparatively speaking, few debates specifically on the subject. In some of the rare occasions when the topic was raised, Nehru spoke of the need to navigate the emerging tensions and faultlines of the Cold War where "India, in so far as it has a foreign policy, has declared that it wants to remain independent and free of all these blocks and that it wants to cooperate on equal terms with all countries".[530] However, it was acknowledged that India was going to have to use, what has been called, weapons of the weak[531], or, as Nehru himself put it, "to function as peace-makers and peace-bringers because today we are not strong enough to be able to have our way".[532] Following the logic

[528] *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. II, 1947, cols. 1259 – 1265.
[529] For details see Boquérat, G. *India's Politics and Foreign Aid; 1947 – 1966.* (Manohar, New Delhi, 2003)
[530] Nehru in the Constituent Assembly Debates (CAD), Wednesday, 22nd January, 1947.
[531] Concept taken from Scott, J.C. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. (Yale University Press, London, 1985) where resistance by the poor includes language that shows disgust and disdain for the others, recounting of events in ways that blame the rich, foot dragging, feigned compliance or methods that are typically indirect and require little organization.
[532] Nehru, *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Tuesday 22nd July, 1947.

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underlying the implementation of 'weapons of the weak', Nehru opted for an international stance which frequently castigated the great powers on their actions and their motives. His reprimands and scolding style was perfected by his representative to the United Nations, Krishna Menon (see below for more details). By March 1948 Nehru's statements had become grander with him arguing that 'India even today counts in world affairs and the trouble you see in the United Nations or in the Security Council is because she counts, not because she does not count.....It is not a question of our viewpoint or of attaching ourselves to this or that bloc; it is merely the fact that we are potentially a great nation and big power.....'[533] The trouble Nehru referred to pertained to the quagmire that was developing over the issue of Kashmir and the often unwelcome interventions that India was making on the question of Palestine among other issues. It is this tone and belief in the manifest destiny of India to play a major role in world politics which progressively intensified in the following years and during the decade of the 1950s.

6.4. The discourse on foreign policy: alternatives to and critics of Nehru.

Right from the early days, Nehru's speeches are laden with references to world problems. In Nehru's outlook, India's interests often seemed to be global rather than national. The 1950 war in Korea was one of the first international missions for Nehru and India, and China already featured prominently in this for it was India's special access to China which Nehru often referred to. For example, in a speech to the interim parliament in 1950 Nehru announced, 'we were in intimate touch with our Ambassador in Peking and we asked him, as we asked our representatives in other countries, to tell us how the various Governments were

[533] *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. III, 1948, Columns 1747 – 1772.

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viewing the scene. We had perhaps a rather special responsibility in regard to China, because we were one of the very few countries represented there, and we were the only country, apart from the countries of the Soviet group, which could find out through the Ambassador what the reactions of the Chinese Government were to the developing events'.[534]

In the same speech Nehru talked about the Chinese 'liberation' of Tibet and acknowledged that the government was taken by surprise when China sent military troops into Tibet, especially since China had agreed to settling the matter through peaceful negotiations.[535] Nevertheless Nehru saw no indication in this of China's duplicity nor did he doubt the reliability and credibility of his ambassador, K.M.Panikkar in Beijing.

In fact it was either rather naive of Nehru or highly presumptuous to imagine that the information which the Chinese were passing on to Ambassador Pannikkar could be taken at face value. To either assume that India had special access or that China was not politically savvy enough to be playing its own international game of diplomacy, smacks of arrogance. A further slap in the face came on 30 October 1950 when China made it clear in a Government note, that Tibet was part of China and therefore entirely a domestic problem and no foreign interference would be tolerated. The Chinese army had been dispatched to 'liberate the Tibetan people and defend the frontiers of China'. It also denounced India's attempt to link the Tibet issue with that of China's United Nations membership and alleged that India had been 'affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet'.[536]

[534] Interim Assembly Debates, 6 December 1950, Column 1261 – 2.
[535] Interim Assembly Debates, 6 December 1950, Column 1267.
[536] Reply of the People's Republic of China to the Memorandum and Note of the Government of India, 31 October 1950.

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It is interesting to note that India's reply was strongly worded. The note described India's amazement at being referred to as an instrument of the foreign hand and assured China that 'it had no desire to interfere or gain any advantage' and that it had sought a peaceful settlement to the Tibet issue, 'adjusting the legitimate Tibetan claim to autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty'. India had no territorial ambitions in Tibet but 'certain rights have grown out of usage and agreements which are natural among neighbours with close cultural and commercial relations'. These had emerged in the form of trade agencies in Gyantse and Yatung and the maintenance of post and telegraph services on the route as well as a small military escort to protect the trade route. India, the note stated, was 'anxious that these establishments, which are to the mutual interest of India and Tibet, and do not detract in any way from Chinese suzerainty in Tibet', should continue.[537] The position taken in this document is revealing since it makes clear that while India recognised Tibet as part of China, it was keen to maintain its extra-territorial rights. China's reply of 16 November ignored the reference to these rights.

Criticising Nehru's stance, N.G. Ranga's[538] interpretation provides a *realist* alternative to the Nehru vision of foreign policy, drawing attention to the fact that the Chinese people may be favourable towards India but the important factor was to gauge the leaders of the Chinese people: 'Who is in charge of the Chinese Government today? Could we be indifferent to the fact that only the other day it was none else than the Chinese Government which had hinted that India was the foreign power in Tibet which was supposed to be queering the pitch?'[539]

[537] Note from the Government of India to the Foreign Ministry of China, 31 October 1950.
[538] Freedom fighter, parliamentarian and peasant leader and later joined the Swatantra Party in protest against cooperative farming.
[539] Interim Assembly Debates, 6 December 1950, Column 1277.

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Dr. S.P.Mookerjee[540], another vocal member of parliament and critic of Nehru's foreign policy made the point that instead of the laurels Nehru bestowed upon himself and India for its role in the Korean crisis, the country ought to learn from the incident, and in particular be aware to the fact that China had acquired enormous strength to the extent of being able to meet on the battle-ground the finest forces of the United States and other allied powers. Following in the wake of China's intervention in Tibet, the Korean crisis ought to have been treated with greater gravity by the Indian government. As he pointed out, 'We have got to look at these problems undoubtedly from the point of view of world peace but principally also from the manner in which our own position may be affected'.[541]

Yet another valid critique was given by Acharya Kripalani[542], whose speeches in parliament presented a logical dissection of Indian foreign policy, beginning with the underlying premises guiding policy to the final intended and unintended outcomes that such a policy was likely to produce. As he rightly pointed out in 1950, despite India and Nehru's vocal stance on international issues, at the end of 1950 India could claim no friends in the international arena amongst the major powers like China, Russia, and United States. An explanation for this was offered by Kripalani, 'I suppose all these things have happened because our basic philosophy is wrong, that is we want to judge every action on its own merits. Another reason for this is that we think we will fight for just causes, or is it lost causes? Neutrality cannot be combined with the urge to reform the world'.[543] Minoo Masani, who later went on to co-found the conservative Swatantra party, endorsed India's commitment to world peace but cautioned about the need to develop a system of collective

[540] Freedom fighter, national leader and founder of the *Bharatiya Jana Sangh*, precursor to the present-day *Bharatiya Janata Party*.
[541] Interim Assembly Debates, 6 December 1950, Column 1282.
[542] Indian politician, freedom fighter, Gandhian and president of the Congress party during the transfer of power.
[543] Interim Assembly Debates, 6 December 1950, Column 1289.

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security. As he rightly asked, had India tried to develop a regional system of collective security? Apart from the moralistic rhetoric, Masani argued that India needed to take a more proactive stance which would demonstrate that the country was not willing to appease or condone aggression of any kind. As he pointed out, 'if we do not do these things.....we shall be strengthening those forces of isolationism in the West which will be prepared to write off Asia, because Asia is not prepared under its present leadership to defend its own freedom and its own collective security'.[544]

On the subject of China, Masani like the other critics, cautioned that in light of China's actions in Korea, Tibet and Indo-China, together with China's rhetoric accusing India of instigating resistance in Tibet and of Nehru being the running dog of Anglo-American imperialism, 'there can be no longer any illusions about friendship in Asia. By the one act of attacking Tibet and deceiving the Indian Government after their assurances given repeatedly, they have shown their utter contempt for the idea that we embraced, namely of a free and united Asia'.[545]

Of course there were defenders of Nehru's position but it is noteworthy that in 1950 the critics far outnumbered the supporters. Among the arguments promoting Nehru's vision in its early days included the point that 'with so small a military force at our disposal he has succeeded in making India respected out of all proportion to our military strength and today the world recognises that we are really independent and that we follow an independent foreign policy'.[546] The discussions in parliament are also valuable for providing an insight into the dilemmas facing the newly founded Indian state in formulating a foreign policy that

[544] Ibid., Column 1298.
[545] Ibid., 6 December 1950, Column 1300.
[546] Professor S.L. Saxena, Interim Assembly Debates, 6 December 1950, Column 1338.

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could be billed as both radically new as well as encapsulating an ancient Indian genius. Hence there were those who advocated Communism as the only way to bring about far-reaching changes to India's economic and social situation and which in turn implied a more favourable attitude towards other fellow communist countries. Others, recognising the merits in the goals of Communism rejected its methods, as manifested in domestic politics as well as international behaviour. Whilst some proposed that Communism would be more appropriate for the Indian condition where discipline, direction and regimentation would bring about more results than democracy which reinforced the existing tendency towards a lack of cohesion and discipline, others pointed out that in a country where religion played such a vital role, Communism would require a spiritual dissolution.

In responding to his critics, Nehru was adamant that 'the real development and strength of an army and a country lies in developing the industrial resources and the economy of the country out of which armies and defence forces and everything come'.[547] On the whole Nehru's tendency in reacting to criticism seems to have been to call into question the expertise and proficiency of his critics. For example, closing the December 6-7th parliamentary consideration of the International Situation and India's foreign policy, Nehru's speech challenges each of his detractors. Thus, he accuses members of being 'full of light – they have no need to grope....in the darkness that surrounds us..... They know exactly what should be done at any moment. I envy them for this feeling of brightness and lightness'.[548] On the point that India's foreign policy lacked realism, Nehru countered, 'It seemed to me that those people who pride themselves of being practical politicians normally know nothing about realism or about the state of affairs'.[549] On the subject of whether India ought to lean

[547] Interim Assembly Debates, 7 December 1950, Column 1373.
[548] Ibid., Column 1371.
[549] Ibid., Column 1376.

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towards any one of the two blocs, or whether if at all there were two blocs, Nehru sharply retorted, 'these questions and these arguments are completely out-of-date. They do not count today...And today if a person thinks in this manner it merely means he is yesterday's man.....and not keeping pace with the changing world and changing events'.[550]

To dismiss the alternatives and questions proposed and raised by members on India's approach to China, Nehru's words were often mocking, 'Do you meant to tell me that I should issue an ultimatum to China not to do this or that.....and tell them that it is foolish to have a doctrine of Communism'.[551] To those who worried about India's foreign policy as being one of sitting on the fence, Nehru again demonstrated an inclination towards denigrating those who opposed him: 'I say we have taken a more active part in the past two or three years in foreign policy than many other countries, barring the Big Powers. I do not understand this business, except that these people who talk like that know nothing about what they are talking of and do not study or read or understand what is happening around them.'[552] The extensive debates in parliament on international affairs reveal that in the very early 1950s there was a great interest in the subject and most importantly, there were a number of dissenting voices. In particular with regards to India's strategy towards China much caution and circumspection was advocated. The parameters of discourse were wide open and it is surprising to read the various standpoints being articulated in opposition to or in criticism of Nehru's policies. Judging from the various stances taken during the parliamentary discussions in the early 1950s, it appears that there was a healthy framework for debate in place, representing a variety of positions ranging from the extremely hawkish, to the pacifist, from

[550] Ibid., Column 1373.
[551] Ibid., Column 1378.
[552] Ibid., Column 1380.

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those advocating world peace to the more realist-driven interpretations of international politics, the primacy of the national interest and the vital importance of defence.

This is surprising because the literature on India's foreign relations of the 1950s tends to cast Nehru as the sole articulator, formulator and executor of Indian foreign policy, unchallenged and unmatched in his expertise and reading of the international situation. The narrative above has demonstrated that this was clearly not the case and there were harbingers of the problems India was to encounter with China following the 'liberation' of Tibet. Hence, as one speaker warned, 'This uncertain boundary line between Tibet and India will be another excuse for intervention'.[553]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, then the Home Minister, was among the most prescient, writing a long letter to Jawaharlal on November 7, 1950 in which he drew Nehru's attention to the danger from China and also recommended certain actions. It is necessary to quote Patel at length to get a taste of his perceptive analysis at a time when he himself was very ill and soon to die: "I have carefully gone through the correspondence between the External Affairs Ministry and our Ambassador in Peking and through him the Chinese Government. There can be no doubt that during the period covered by this correspondence the Chinese must have been concentrating for an onslaught on Tibet. The final action of the Chinese, in my judgement, is little short of perfidy.....Even though we regard ourselves as friends of China, the Chinese do not regard us as their friends. During the last several months, outside the Russian camp, we have practically been alone in championing the cause of Chinese entry into the UNO and in securing from the Americans assurances on the question of Formosa.....I doubt if we can go any further than we have done already to convince China of our good

[553] Interim Assembly Debates, 6 December 1950, Column 1333.

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intentions, friendliness and goodwill....Their last telegram to us is an act of gross discourtesy not only in the summary way it disposes of our protest against the entry of Chinese forces into Tibet but also in the wild insinuation that our attitude is determined by foreign influences. It looks as though it is not a friend speaking in that language but a *potential enemy*.". Sardar Patel continued, "In the background of this, we have to consider the situation that now faces us as a result of the disappearance of Tibet.....The Chinese interpretation of suzerainty seems to be different. We can, therefore, safely assume that very soon they will disown all the stipulations which Tibet has entered into with us in the past".[554]

In addition to this, Patel provided a list of actions India ought to take with regards to improving intelligence-gathering, consolidating military guards at important routes or areas likely to be under dispute, updating communications with frontier outposts, developing a policy on the issue of the MacMahon line. Of critical importance, Patel strongly advised the need to improve relations with the population on the North-East frontier who needed to be fully assimilated into the Union of India which was both a political and administrative task. In contrast with Nehru, who spoke always in terms of the international consequences of foreign policy or how India's reputation was at stake, Patel possessed a hardnosed practical realism with a primary concern for domestic politics. A note sent by Jawaharlal Nehru guiding the foreign department and instructions to be sent to B.N.Rao, India's representative at the UNO on the position to be taken should Tibet come up for discussion in the Security Council, provides an apt contrast. In one place the note states, "I think that it is exceedingly unlikely that we may have to face any real military invasion from the Chinese side...in the foreseeable future. I base this conclusion on a consideration of various world factors." Going on, Nehru provided his assessment of China's strategic situation: "China, though internally

[554]Das, D. (ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1971) Vol. 10, pp. 344-5.

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big, is in a way amorphous and easily capable of being attacked on its sea coasts and by air. ...It is inconceivable that it should divert its forces and its strength across the inhospitable terrain of Tibet and undertake a wild adventure across the Himalayas. Any such attempt will greatly weaken its capacity to meet its real enemies on other fronts."[555] That this precisely might have been the right time for India to take a forceful position before China got any stronger did not fit Nehru's self-perception of being the magnanimous statesman. Nevertheless events proved Patel to be the more accurate reader of relations between the two countries, and this was despite the fact that he was not the external affairs minister nor did he profess to have an understanding of 'world factors'. The weaknesses in Nehru's interpretation of China's intentions and perception of India will emerge more strongly in the remaining sections of this chapter.

6.5. The Panchasheela Agreement: an analytic narrative of intentions, functions and constraints.

The Agreement on Tibet (otherwise known as the Panchasheela Agreement) was signed in Beijing on 29 April, 1954[556]. Its practical provisions pertained to the:

1. Establishment of three trade agencies by each side;
2. Recognition of a number of trade marts; and
3. Facilities for traditional pilgrimages in both countries by persons of Hindu and Buddhist faiths.

[555] Quoted in Kripalani, J.B. *My Times, An Autobiography*, (Rupa & Co. New Delhi, 2004), p. 812.
[556] For a copy of the document please see the Appendix.

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Apart from Gartok, to the east of Simla in Himachal Pradesh, the trade agencies granted to India were in locations where India already possessed rights and was choosing to relinquish these as an act of good faith. These included military escorts stationed at Yatung and Gyantse in Tibet and postal, telegraph and public-telephone services along with twelve rest-houses and other buildings owned by the Government of India in Tibet. In contrast China was not only given completely new rights to set up trade agencies in India but in addition, these were to be located in such important cities as the capital, New Delhi and in the state of West Bengal Calcutta and Kalimpong which could have been strategically important trade portals. It is also noteworthy that throughout the document Tibet was referred to as the 'Tibet Region of China', clearly endorsing China's legitimate control over Tibet.

The preamble contains the famed 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence' or *Panchasheela.* Literally meaning, the 'five principles of rules of conduct' in Sanskrit, Panchasheela was drawn from the original Buddhist conception of ten negative prohibitions and 18 positive injunctions that must be followed in the pursuit of enlightenment. The five principles refer to the basic concepts of moral behaviour which all must follow, known in Buddhism as *Pansil*. This was first applied to politics in Indonesia by President Sukarno who in 1945 formulated the five basic principles of his state policy: belief in God, humanitarianism, nationalism, democracy and social justice. Given the close relationship between Nehru and Sukarno and India's support of Indonesia's freedom struggle against the Dutch it is quite possible that Nehru borrowed the idea, going one step further to apply the guiding principles to inter-state relations.[557]

[557] In October 1945, Sukarno had invited 'the four leaders of freedom', of which Jawaharlal Nehru was one, to come and see the conditions in Indonesia.

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Signed by India's Ambassador to China, N.R.Raghavan and China's Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Change Han-Fu, the document's preamble contained the five principles of:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
2. Mutual non-aggression;
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
4. Equality and mutual benefit; and
5. Peaceful coexistence.

Describing the agreement in parliament on 15 May, 1954 (after it had been signed), Nehru proclaimed, 'These principles not only indicate the policy that we pursue in regard to these matters not only with China but with any neighbouring country, or, for that matter, any other country, but it is also a statement of wholesome principles'.[558] The way Nehru projected the Panchasheela Agreement, it is clear that he considered it to be something which could teach the international community something about diplomacy. Arguing that 'Collective Security' initiatives are equivalent to 'preparations for collective war', he portrayed Panchasheela as an exercise in 'collective peace, with no element of aggression against any country'.[559] Further on in the speech after having covered, what he saw to be, India's unofficial but morally correct stance on the Indo-China problem and the highly independent position taken by India advocating clemency for Japanese war criminals, Nehru reiterated the importance of India's approach which 'is that of trying to work for collective peace....The other collective security that, - all the time, by threats and fear of mounting armaments – is not even bringing a climate of peace'.[560]

[558] Lok Sabha Debates, 15 May 1954, Column 7496.
[559] Ibid., Column 7496.
[560] Ibid., Column 7513.

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Significantly, Nehru attached the most meaning to the Preamble. The individual articles which contained the substance of the agreement and basically signed away India's privileges in exchange for next to nothing were, it seems, not the crux of the matter. The emphasis and attention was directed at the preamble containing the five principles of peaceful coexistence, which in fact the Chinese were initially reluctant to include! It is also telling that the document was signed as the dryly titled, 'Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Trade and Inter-Course between Tibet Region of China and India' and did not technically go by the name *Panchasheela,* the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence'. The large number of issues dealt with in the document, did not include any reference to border concerns, but addressed trade, pilgrim traffic, communications. All these, Nehru explained are small points in comparison to 'the major thing about this agreement...the preamble'.[561]

On the issue of Tibet and the fact that the 1954 agreement gave de facto recognition to China's recently acquired position in Tibet, Nehru's defence interestingly, consisted of trying to further blur the already thin lines of distinction between the concepts of 'sovereignty' and 'suzerainty'. Granted that the difference between the two is subtle it is important to note that in his speech, Nehru used them interchangeably which must have been a deliberate choice for he could have alternatively chosen to emphasize the differences in meaning and to dissect the implications for India. Instead, he stated, 'I am not aware of any time during the last few hundred years when Chinese sovereignty or if you like suzerainty was challenged by any outside country'.[562]

[561] Ibid., Column 7495.
[562] Ibid., Column 7497.

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Although, by May 1954 the open criticism of Nehru in parliamentary debates on foreign affairs was considerably less compared with the discussions in 1950, a few voices persisted in raising questions about Nehru's choice of action. It is interesting to note that among the last to oppose or question Nehru's arguments and policy choices, was Acharya Kripalani, leader in the Socialist Party. In 1953 Kripalani sharply criticised what he referred to as India's 'posturing on the international stage'.[563] Describing India's involvement in the aftermath of the Korean crisis, Kripalani provided a synopsis of how India's dabbling in international affairs ended up annoying all the parties involved to the point where India's volunteered custodian troops, provided to man the cease-fire line, could not even touch the soil of South Korea and had to be airdropped into the neutral zone.[564] In a criticism aimed at Nehru's high profile style of diplomacy, Kripalani advocated that especially in times 'when nations are suffering from a kind of hysteria, it will be best for us to cultivate our garden and confine ourselves largely to the four corners of the home front'.[565] In the 1954 discussion Kripalani was a lone voice in condemning China's actions in Tibet and questioning the trustworthiness of China.

In the May 15, 1954 debate Acharya Kripalani was clear in his denunciation of China's actions in Tibet. If India was going to stand up to Western acts of colonial aggression, he argued, then India should also be able to condemn China's act of colonial aggression. Describing Tibet as culturally more akin to India than Communist China, China's act of deliberate aggression constituted a case where, 'one nation by force of arms, or fraud occupies the territory of another nation'.[566] Going on to puncture the grandiose portrayal of the Asian Prime Ministers Conference held in Ceylon which Nehru had depicted as unique

[563] Lok Sabha Debates, 13 September 1953, Column 4008.
[564] Ibid., Column 4010.
[565] Ibid., Column 4010.
[566] Lok Sabha Debates, 15 May 1954, Column 7548.

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and historical, Kripalani pointed out that 'An Asian Prime Minister's Conference without the Near East, without Japan, without even China, does not become an Asian conference'.[567] Cautioning that neutrality lasted only as long as it served a nation's purpose, Kripalani was one of the few to openly state that the conference did not contribute anything concrete other than simply adding to the prestige of India and Ceylon.

This is interesting because by 1954, communist voices, like H.N.Mukerjee[568] had considerably toned down their opposition to Nehru, especially following the 1954 Panchasheela Agreement which had bestowed so many advantages on Communist China. Since the early 1950s, Mukerjee had been advocating an even more positive and pro-China stance to be taken up by India for instance on the question of China's membership of the United Nations. Even in September 1953 Mukerjee's response to Nehru's opening speech was full of censuring remarks and observations. On the issue of Kashmir (treated as a foreign policy subject in the Lok Sabha debates) Mukerjee demanded stronger action and on the subject of relations with Nepal he was highly critical of India's attempt to meddle in Nepalese politics. Most crucially perhaps was Mukerjee's stance regarding India's membership of the Commonwealth. Given Nehru's support for India's membership and continued close association with Britain this must have threatened to turn into a politically explosive issue with sufficient emotive value to be able to rally popular opposition. In his contribution to the debates of 17 September, 1953 Mukerjee's speech was largely devoted to criticising Nehru's relations with Britain and the image that was being created of India and Pakistan acting as 'the brokers doing the dirty job for these imperialists'.[569] Here he was referring to the emerging Suez Crisis and the suggestions that were being made at the time in

[567] Ibid., Column 7552.
[568] Leading figure in the Communist Party of India.
[569] Lok Sabha Debates, 17 September 1953, Column 4027.

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the international press that India and Pakistan, fresh from the Coronation and the Commonwealth Conference in London, could carry Britain's message and press for Britain's case. In this speech Mukerjee accused Nehru's policies of being pusillanimous, daring him to act 'really and truly in consistency with the spirit of our national movement'.[570] Such spirited criticism was almost non-existent in the foreign policy debates from the mid-1950s on.

Defending the agreement in the Lok Sabha on 30 September 1954, Nehru lambasted his critics who had referred to the 'melancholy chapter of Tibet'. Advising members of the House to read the history of British India, China and Tibet, Nehru asked 'What did any honourable member of this House expect us to do in regard to Tibet any time?...Where do we come into the picture unless we want to assume the aggressive role of interfering with other countries?' Answering his own question Nehru added, 'We do not go like Don Quixote with lance in hand against everything we dislike; we put up with these things because we would be, without making any difference, only getting into trouble'.[571]

With the 1954 Panchasheela Agreement, it is possible to note a crucial change in the political arena, both in terms of the parameters of debate and in the actual style of foreign policy-making. Criticism, dissenting views and a consideration of alternatives to the prime minister's views on India's foreign policy had become markedly reduced whilst those supporting the government dominated the debate. Sycophancy towards Nehru had become commonplace by the mid-1950s. Take for example the words of parliamentary member, Mr. Joachim Alva[572]: 'It should not be merely enough that we have a foreign policy. We have a Prime Minister who has perhaps given us the best foreign policy. He will perhaps be known

[570] Lok Sabha Debates, 13 September 1953, Column 4030.
[571] Lok Sabha Debates, 30 September 1954.
[572] Freedom fighter and Congress party leader.

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in history as the greatest Foreign Minister our country ever had. Perhaps he is the greatest Foreign Minister in the world today'.[573]

Furthermore, the explicitly pro-Chinese tilt which the Agreement symbolised and endorsed through its provisions, resulted in the implantation of a bias towards China in the foreign policy making establishment, a constraint which continues to influence India's policy towards China. While the communists were appeased to a large extent by the pro-China nature of the agreement, the Socialists remained on the fringes. Kripalani's views for instance were usually dismissed as unworkable, illogical or even fantastical.[574] As a result, the 'socialist' position, despite Nehru's professed socialist inclinations, was not incorporated into the general corpus of foreign policy goals and priorities. One possible explanation, for this is the undue influence that Krishna Menon and K.N.Panikkar (see section below) wielded over Nehru and the fact that they were themselves more inclined towards communism rather than a more moderate form of socialism. This was probably compounded by the long-running rivalry between Nehru and Kripalani dating back to pre-independence days (see chapter four), even continuing into 1962 when Kripalani contested a seat in the general elections from North Bombay, in opposition to Krishna Menon who was being openly backed by Nehru and the Congress party machinery.[575] Furthermore, in the mid-1950s it was only the communists who posed any real challenge to Nehru as a political force, the rest of the opposition being far too fragmented to constitute a real front against Nehru. Hence, policies which also won the approval of the Communists meant that Nehru faced no real threat to his position in power.

[573]Lok Sabha Debates, 18 May 1954, Column 7630.
[574] See for example Lok Sabha Debates, 15 May 1954, Column 7613.
[575] See Dastur, A.J., *Menon vs. Kripalani. North Bombay Election 1962* (Bombay University, 1967).

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6.6. The Implications of Panchasheela

Taking the 1954 agreement to be an affirmation of the good relations between India and China, Nehru projected Panchasheela as an internationally-applicable code of conduct. A joint statement issued by Prime Ministers Zhou En-Lai and Jawaharlal Nehru on June 28, 1954 proclaimed, "If these principles are applied not only between various countries but also in international relations generally, they would form a solid foundation for peace and security and the fears and apprehensions, that exist today would give place to a feeling of confidence".[576] At the Bandung Afro-Asian summit of April 1955 the five principles were fully embodied in a ten point declaration which set out the framework governing relations amongst member countries and on Independence day, August 15, 1955, Nehru hailed Panchasheela as the guarantee of international peace and amity and as a code of conduct for application to international problems.[577]

While Bandung represented a convergence of Indian and Chinese policies on the Panchasheela principles, it was China that emerged as the star of the conference. Chou En-Lai's speech of 19 April, affirmed China's allegiance to the Five Principles and underlined his endeavour to 'seek common ground and not create divergence' but a deadlock quickly ensured between countries that were aligned and those that professed a commitment to non-alignment. The draft resolution on colonialism reached a stalemate when some participants insisted that communism should be denounced as a new form of colonialism. An impassioned speech by Nehru deprecated the approach of the pro-Western participants whilst Ceylon's Sir John Kotewala demanded that in pursuit of co-existence, China should ask all local communist parties in Asia and Africa to disband and use its influence with the Soviet Union

[576] *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, Vol. 26, pp. 410 – 412.
[577] Ibid. Second Series, Vol. 29, p. 45.

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to dissolve the Cominform. Nehru, trying to bring about a consensus, recognised that both communism and anti-communism (equated with the Cominform and SEATO respectively) were dangerous and, that if co-existence was to be real, such organisations would have to wind up. The show however, was stolen by Chou En-Lai who made an unexpected and sensational statement, announcing China's willingness to negotiate with the United States and to discuss the relaxation of tensions in the Far East and especially in the Formosa area. This was regarded as a major breakthrough and a highly praiseworthy gesture on China's part. As a result it was China, and particularly in the form of the individual, Chou En-Lai, who was seen to have been the central player at the Bandung Conference. Nehru himself recognised this, writing to his Chief Ministers afterwards that, 'The Prime Minister of China, Chou En-lai, attracted the most attention both in public and in the Conference. This was natural as he was not only playing a great part in the crisis of the Far East (Indo-China) but was rather a mysterious figure whom people had not seen.'[578]

As a result, China at Bandung clearly outdid India, making critical diplomatic gains whilst India came away with little that was concrete in terms of policy achievements, apart from providing Nehru with the opportunity to play the role of chairperson.[579] Providing China with a platform through which to demonstrate its independence from the Soviet Union, the Bandung Conference enabled China to make contacts with Indonesia, Egypt and Pakistan, countries which were later to become important allies. To demonstrate, China's diplomatic offensive it is noteworthy that between November 1955 and February 1956, Chou En-Lai

[578] Parthasarathi, G. (ed.) *Letters to Chief Ministers 1947 - 1964*, Vol. 4., pp. 159 – 171, New Delhi, 28 April 1955.

[579] See Nehru's speeches in the closed sessions to get an impression of how Nehru sought to provide the grand overview of international politics: *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, Volume 28, pp. 106 – 124.

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visited eight Asian countries (North Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Burma, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal and Ceylon).

By the end of 1955, Panchasheela had been internationally launched, heralded in speeches at home and abroad, enshrined in agreements and used to cement bi-lateral relations.[580] Nehru had made a concerted effort to embed Panchasheela within a legacy of Indian tradition and ethos, portraying it as the natural choice for a country with India's ancient history and experience of peaceful resistance during the freedom struggle. Furthermore 'Peaceful Coexistence' was often described as the 'perfect approach between two countries to rule out aggression or interference.'[581] During these years, leading up to the 1954 agreement and into 1955, Panchasheela was also promoted as a cornerstone for the country's non-alignment policy.[582] For example in his report to the AICC on 10 January 1955, Nehru proclaimed that 'At a moment when the countries of the world become increasingly intolerant towards each other, we have to remember that tolerance is not only a virtue but the only practical approach to the problems of today.....In the international field this may be called coexistence and the application of the *Panch Shila*, the Five Principles....This coexistence is not merely an absence of war and conflict but a recognition that each country should live its own life and not interfere with others and should have friendly approach to other countries, even though they differ from it in many ways.'[583]

[580] Joint statements by India and China on 28 June 1954, by China and Burma on 29 June 1954 and India and Yugoslavia on 23 December 1854, declared that Panchasheela should be the governing principle between them and in their international relations.

[581] *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, Vol. 27, p. 5. Statement made in a Press Conference, 15 October, 1954.

[582] See for instance Nehru's note to the Commonwealth Secretary dates, 7 November 1954 in which he claimed that 'relations with China on the basis of the Five Principles would definitely tend to weaken the danger of internal communism.', Ibid., p. 71.

[583] Ibid. p. 265.

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6.7. Analysing the Origins of the Panchasheela Agreement

While exploring the stages of conceptualisation and institutionalisation of Panchasheela a coterie of close advisors surrounding Nehru, emerges as a key factor in explaining why Nehru initiated and extolled an agreement in which China appeared to be the major beneficiary. Three individuals are of particular interest: K.M.Panikkar, independent India's first ambassador to China, T.N.Kaul who was part of the negotiations process leading up to the 1954 agreement and Krishna Menon, a long-time confidante of Nehru's and later, a cabinet minister. Each were important, and perhaps there were more like them, but these three were not only close advisors but also party to the policy-making process where, in the capacity of their official positions, they provided back-up and feedback to Nehru in terms of his policy towards and, assessment of China. Especially in the field of foreign policy, the role of close advisors and particular individuals took on an additional importance, given the relatively under-institutionalised and highly personalised style of policy-making that emerged with Nehru occupying the position of External Affairs Minister throughout his years as Prime Minister. Each of the three individuals under study here held views that reinforced Nehru's impression of China and his aspirations regarding India's international role.

6.7.1. K.M. Panikkar

Educated at the University of Oxford, K.M.Panikkar was a known scholar, historian and diplomat. Appointed as ambassador first to nationalist China, under the Kuomintang, he continued as ambassador to the People's Republic of China, putting him in the unusual position of serving, back-to-back, two regimes that had been fighting a civil war against each

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other. Making a point in his autobiography how, during the growing chaos of the civil war in China as the Communists took Nanjing in April 1949 he refused to leave, Panikkar wrote, "The Americans encouraged other foreigners also to leave, since they felt that such a mass exodus would isolate the Chinese government and justify American policy. I was not willing to leave by that ship for I preferred to continue my isolation rather than travel under the American flag."[584] Instead Panikkar was to become India's representative under the Communist regime and, over the years, one of Nehru's main sources of information about the situation in China, the perception Chinese leaders held of India and the likely responses they would have to various scenarios.

Convinced that the policies India had inherited from the British were unsustainable, Panikkar wrote that 'I had even before I started for Peking (i.e. in 1948), come to the conclusion that the British policy of looking upon Tibet as an area in which we had special political interests could not be maintained'.[585] Panikkar is usually blamed for having provided the wrong advice to Nehru, for failing to read the signals in Beijing and for transmitting wrong information. Nehru himself severely admonished him at the time of the Chinese 'liberation' of Tibet in 1950. For instance, a cable from Nehru dated 27 October 1950, criticised Panikkar for being 'weak and apologetic' towards the Chinese Government and for the fact that information regarding the Chinese Government's directive to the 'Liberation Army' was transmitted to India by the U.K. High Commissioner and not India's own Ambassador.[586] What is surprising, is how despite such a lapse and cause for embarrassment, Panikkar was to continue as ambassador to China till 1952 instead of being recalled. Additionally, Nehru's criticism that 'our views regarding threatened invasion of Tibet and its

[584] Panikkar, K.M. *An Autobiography*, (Madras, Oxford University Press, 1977) p. 231.
[585] Panikkar, K.M. *In Two Chinas*, (G.Allen & Unwin, London, 1955), p. 102.
[586] *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, Vol. 15, pp. 332 – 3.

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probable repercussion should have been communicated to them clearly and unequivocally. This has evidently not been done'[587] is also intriguing, given that India's public position on Tibet, as articulated by the Prime Minister himself, prior to 1950 had been ambiguous. This discrepancy provides room for speculation that Nehru's reprimanding of Panikkar was a face-saving strategy and not meant to indicate any drastic shift in policy.

As tensions mounted over China's intentions in Tibet, Panikkar sent a telegram to Nehru, dated 19 November 1950, in which he stated that the controversy with China over Tibet was a 'result of misunderstanding on both sides, on their side based on our acceptance of their sovereignty and on our side, by a feeling that China brushed aside discourteously our friendly advice'.[588] His advice, which seemed to reflect primarily Chinese concerns rather than India's strategic interests, advocated the avoidance of any further strain on relations and in particular that India should refrain from using the word 'suzerainty' when describing China's position in Tibet. Rather than sticking to his earlier position that the word, 'suzerainty' was more appropriate than the 'sovereignty' of China in relation to Tibet[589], Nehru's response to Panikkar was to acknowledge that the 'use of word "sovereignty" or "suzerainty" is rather academic....Words are not important.'[590] Rather than insisting that India's position be clarified to the Chinese, Nehru found himself adhering to Panikkar's advice and concern for China's perception and insecurity.

Later on as well, Panikkar had the ear of the Prime Minister. When, initially Nehru was keen to take up the issue of the frontier with Zhou En Lai, it was Panikkar who consistently advised against this. Writing to Nehru on 15 June, 1952 regarding his meeting

[587] Ibid.
[588] Ibid. p. 349.
[589] Ibid. Note 18 November, 1950, p. 343.
[590] Ibid. Cable to Panikkar, 20 November, 1950, p. 350.

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with Zhou En-Lai, Panikkar claimed that Zhou 'clearly wanted to convey the impression' that the only issues to be settled related to 'an agreement in principle' about the 'transformation' of the Indian Mission in Lhasa 'into a proper Consulate-General' as an immediate practical step' and negotiations for India's 'special rights like military posts, trade marts and posts and telegraphs'.[591] Nehru's reply to Panikkar showed that he was keen on taking up the border question. His telegram to Panikkar on 16 June. 1952 read, 'We think it rather odd, that in discussing Tibet with you, Zhou En-Lai did not refer at all to our frontiers. For our part, we attach more importance to this than to other matters'.[592]

However, it is important to note that Nehru was persuaded into dropping the border issue. Once Panikkar was had been transferred from Peking in 1952, Nehru could have altered India's stance but instead he chose to continue the approach of not mentioning the border. Hence, when officials from Delhi went to China to discuss a trade agreement, Nehru issued a directive expressly instructing that the boundary need not be raised.[593]

6.7.2. T.N.Kaul

A careerist in the Indian civil service, T.N.Kaul served as India's Ambassador to a number of countries in addition to being foreign secretary and represents one of the insiders who was party to the brokering of the 1954 agreement. Writing in 1989, Kaul offers his explanation and understanding of Panchasheela. In the first place it was meant to act as a model for other Asian countries: "Panchasheela was the guideline to resolve problems

[591] Gopal, S. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 18, p. 474.
[592] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 178.
[593] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 179.

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peacefully, bilaterally and without outside intervention, on the basis of mutual benefit and non-aggression, equality, non-interference in internal affairs and mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country".[594] Secondly, Panchasheela was to be part and parcel of Nehru's overall process leading to the "resurgence of Asia and the establishment of Asian pride and personality".[595] To achieve this, a key stumbling block was how to assuage China's suspicions and fears? Kaul wrote, 'he (Nehru) told me, it should be our honest and sincere effort to develop friendship and cooperation with our great neighbour China because otherwise imperialists and colonialists would try to fish in troubled waters and try to divide both countries'.[596] Kaul's interpretation seems to confirm the view that Nehru's aspirations were greater than the sum of India's core national interests.

Nehru aspired to be amongst the first to evolve a method of peaceful and friendly coexistence between two sovereign countries following different socio-economic and political ideologies. Nehru envisioned a role for India that went far beyond her actual capabilities and resources for exerting influence. It is this conviction which to a large extent propelled India's overtures and concessions towards China despite the warning signals and, which explains Nehru's dog headed enthusiasm for the agreement compared with the comparatively, lukewarm Chinese response. Hence, as Kaul noted when the Chinese refused to agree to more than 8 years as the duration of the 1954 Agreement, this 'created a doubt in our minds whether the Chinese were really keen on having a peaceful border with India and whether they would really respect our territorial integrity'.[597] Kaul claimed he warned Pandit Nehru that the Chinese were probably thinking of consolidating their hold over Tibet and other regions within these 5 to 8 years, and that we ought to do the same. The Indians it

[594] T.N, Kaul, *Ambassadors Need Not Lie, Vol. 3.* (Lancer International, Delhi, 1989), p. 81.
[595] Ibid. p. 84.
[596] Ibid. p. 85.
[597] Ibid. p. 88.

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seems were keen on a 25 year duration, ultimately a compromise was negotiated for eight years. Kaul also reported that the Chinese did not want the Five Principles to be part of the actual agreement but instead to be announced separately in a press statement. India, however, insisted that it be included in the preamble. Furthermore, China objected to mentioning the six border passes in the middle sector between Tibet, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, probably because this implied some recognition of that section of the border. Finally, Kaul claimed that the Chinese objected to the mention of Demchok (a pass in Ladakh), a position he interpreted as demonstrating their reluctance to upset Pakistan by any reference to Kashmir, and additionally, for fear of strengthening India's claim to Aksai China (in the Ladakh area), which the Chinese were interested in as a route linking Sinkiang with Western Tibet.[598]

Panikkar, also writing on the negotiations leading up to the 1954 agreement confirmed these observations. Both therefore, at least in hindsight, give the impression that the Chinese were tough negotiators and how even though the agreement ultimately benefitted them far more than it did India in material terms, it was the symbolic value that was of such great importance for India.[599] For instance, Kaul described the agreement as, 'an attempt, the first in post-World War II history, to put bilateral relations between the two big countries of Asia on a principled basis.'[600]

[598].Kaul,T.N. *Diplomacy in Peace and War*, (Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1979), p. 102.
[599] Kaul,T.N. *Ambassadors Need Not Lie, Vol. 3.* (Lancer International, Delhi, 1989), p. 87 – 88.
[600] Kaul, T.N. *Diplomacy in Peace and War*, (Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1979), p. 104.

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6.7.3. V.K. Krishna Menon

Amongst Nehru's coterie of close advisors, Krishna Menon is a central figure. It is usually speculated that Nehru's dependence on and enduring loyalty to Menon stemmed from their long acquaintance dating back to the 1930s when Menon was instrumental in providing Nehru with contacts and the introductions to London's high society and, that as a result Nehru had always felt indebted to and in awe of him. Madhu Limaye, a scholar of Indian politics, puts an extra spin on the mutual partnership, "Nehru's attachment for Menon was not only due to the many services he rendered before and after independence to him. Morarji (Desai) says Nehru felt beholden to Menon because he constantly tried to make out Nehru as a man greater than even Mahatma Gandhi. There is truth in this observation. I used to meet K.Menon frequently in the winter of 1947-48 during my stay in Britain and his recurring theme was that we young Socialists should attach themselves to the modernist Nehru rather than to Gandhi".[601] Sharing a similar ideological inclination and a passion for international diplomacy, far above domestic politics, Menon was one of the few to last through all three of Nehru's terms as prime minister, surviving even the 1962 debacle after which despite having to resign as defence minister, he was supported by Nehru in the 1962 Bombay assembly elections.

Through the latter half of the 1930s, Menon played an active role in organising Nehru's visits to Europe as can be seen in the numerous letters between the two.[602] As the leading figure in the Home League movement in Britain, Menon was probably a more publicly recognised figure than Nehru, who was just beginning to make his mark as a radical in Congress politics in India. When, in 1935 Nehru visited London, Krishna Menon took it

[601] Limaye, M. *Cabinet Governments in India*, (1989, Radiant Publishers), p. 82.
[602] See for example Gopal, S. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru,* Vol. 7, p. 16.

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upon himself to make all the arrangements, organising meetings, speeches and interviews. As a result Nehru found himself in the company of upcoming British leaders and intellectuals like Harold Laski, Stafford Cripps, Ellen Wilkinson, Carl Heath, Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, Paul Robeson and others.[603] In 1938 Nehru returned to Europe and the two visited Spain together. A letter from Menon to Nehru on 24th May, 1938 reveals the extent to which Menon was in charge of Nehru's 'public relations', managing his day to day engagements and agenda. Together, they braved the dangers of the Spanish Civil War prompting Menon to set up a Spanish Relief Committee in England for which Nehru raised funds in India. The experience in Spain cemented their friendship, uniting their commitment to the struggle against imperialism and fascism. Letters between Nehru and Menon through the late 1930s and 1940s reveal the extent to which Nehru relied on Menon's knowledge and advice on subjects ranging from constitutional matters to international affairs. On various occasions Nehru wrote to Menon requesting him to return to India. While he did not do this, Menon came back during the negotiations for the transfer of power and was a central figure, providing Nehru with support and confidence when having to face other top leaders within the Congress such as Rajagopalachari and Sardar Patel. The partnership between Nehru and Menon was publicly manifested through the forewords that Menon wrote in Nehru's books, *Unity of India*, and *Glimpses of World History*.

In 1951, on Nehru's suggestion, Menon became the leader of the Indian delegation to the United Nations. Closely involved with the diplomacy over the Korean crisis, Menon also played an important role at the Bandung Conference and was a key advocate for admitting China into the UN. In February 1955 Menon was appointed Minister without Portfolio.

[603] V.K.M.Kutty, *V.K.Krishna Menon* (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1988), p.70.

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While Nehru followed closely the advice of both Menon and Panikkar he ignored the requests and advice of others. Hence, on the Uttar Pradesh front, Nehru wrote initially on 12th May, 1954 to the Secretary General that, 'I also agree that we should establish check posts at all disputed points, wherever they might be and our administration should be right up to these borders. This matter has been delayed and we should try to expedite it'.[604] Nothing however was done and within a few months China had begun to encroach upon territory in U.P. Whether this was a case of misinformation and poor implementation, the point is that Nehru did not follow up what should have been a priority for national security.

Generally, Nehru's stance on the border is a highly confused and ambiguous one. On the one hand he clearly repudiated the British legacy and did not want India to be seen publicly in any way as being a legatee of British privileges in defence strategy and foreign policy. Perhaps this was linked to Nehru's innate conviction that he would fashion a new outlook, a new image as well as new instruments of foreign policy for India with implications for world peace and lessons for others to emulate in the art of diplomacy. On the other hand, the grandstanding aside, Nehru refused to re-think the MacMahon Line which could not have represented more of a British colonial legacy. Given that this was a serious roadblock in negotiations with the Chinese, one can only speculate as with a lot of other issues, Nehru had imbibed a strongly colonial perspective of India's borders. However, in contrast with Sardar Patel who adhered to an equally strong commitment to the colonial legacy of India's borders as well as the need to actively defend them, Nehru's intransigence on the border issue ultimately came into conflict with his proclamations about India-China's brotherly friendship.

[604] Gopal, S. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 26, p. 468.

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Answering a question in parliament on 20 November 1950, on the issue of whether India had a well-defined boundary with Tibet, Nehru stated, 'Tibet is contiguous to India from the region of Ladakh to the boundary of Nepal and from Bhutan to the Irrawady-Salween divide in Assam. The frontier from Bhutan eastwards has been clearly defined by the McMahon line which was fixed by the Simla Convention of 1914. The frontier from Ladakh to Nepal is defined clearly by long usage and custom.....Our maps show that the McMahon line is our boundary, and that is our boundary – map or no map. The fact remains and we stand by that boundary and we will not allow anybody to come across that boundary'.[605]

This stance did not change over time. Writing to the Foreign Secretary on 1 July 1954, just shortly after the conclusion of the Panchasheela Agreement, Nehru stated, "We should simply refer to our frontier. Indeed the use of the name McMahon is unfortunate and takes us back to British days of expansion. All our old maps dealing with this frontier should be carefully examined and, where necessary, withdrawn.....Both as flowing from our policy and as a consequence of our agreement with China, this frontier should be considered a firm and definite one which is not open to discussion with anyone".[606] Nehru's position sounds clear but, it was precisely the Panchasheela Agreement, and the grand rhetoric which had accompanied it and gone into its making which clouded India's position.

The fact that these three individuals gained the ear of Nehru and that all basically reinforced the same ideas about China suggests that Nehru was very quickly trapped within one interpretation. By not entertaining alternatives, his understanding was one-sided and heavily biased by the communist-leanings of his colleagues. Furthermore, reading about the

[605] Nehru's answer to a question in Parliament on whether India had any well-defined boundary with Tibet, 20 November, 1950, Ibid, Vol. 15, p. 348.
[606] Ibid. Vol. 26, p. 481.

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individuals it seems likely that each was aware of how to maintain their hold over Nehru – by playing on the international ‘statesman’ role. Hence by downplaying the security concerns and needs of the county, and over-playing Nehru’s capacities as a diplomat and visionary they were able to exert an undue influence over him and foreign policy-making.

6.8. Conclusion

Vision and Strategy in the Panchasheela Agreement.

Tibet plays a critical role in India’s national security given that it shares a 2000 mile border with India. Despite the fact that India and China went to war in 1962 over the border and that the Panchasheela Agreement effectively came to an end after its eight year validity lapsed, the issue of Tibet and the symbolism behind the agreement continue to be of relevance in terms of the constraints they impose on India’s China policy. What emerges from a close analysis of the sequence of events is that Nehru did not possess a well thought-out strategy towards China. His early writings reveal that he spent little time considering this subject which mostly consisted of visualising Asian unity based on Indian leadership and Sino-Indian friendship. Once in power, his policy-making style indicated a tendency to respond in an ad hoc fashion to events. This was on occasion justified by Nehru who claimed India’s approach to international politics was to think of a response on the basis of assessing events as they occurred and on their own terms, rather than part of an overall string of causally related moves. However, in 1950 Nehru’s policy on China faced a major crisis. China’s ‘liberation’ of Tibet through the use of military force called into question India’s ability to influence China let alone world peace. At the time Nehru was proclaiming that India had a special role to play in international affairs and was strenuously projecting the

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country's role as mediator in the Korean crisis. This was to be a way of launching India on the international podium. China's military intervention in Tibet was however, a flagrant rejection of Nehru's advice to use peaceful methods and furthermore, it exposed the weaknesses in Nehru's defence policy which had not planned for a scenario where India would share a direct border with China. The confusion and errors surrounding the use of sovereignty versus suzerainty in official notes did not add to Nehru's credentials as an effective statesman and the debates in parliament in 1950 and 1951 contained a number of disapproving voices. Furthermore it has to be remembered that Nehru's position within the Congress party was far from secure during this period.

As a result, a foreign policy breakthrough was imperative and Panchasheela developed into a timely opportunity to showcase India's, or rather, Nehru's diplomatic skills and, to confirm the wisdom of non-alignment. With the agreement India waived its rights in Tibet as a gesture of good will to China, in consonance with India's stand on inherited colonial privileges, and at the same time, the preamble's 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence', acted as India's voice to the world, through which Nehru hoped to be heard and lauded. For a document of such significance, Panchasheela evolved within a relatively short space of time, in response to the changed circumstances of the border region. There is no evidence in Nehru's writings of his having pondered or conceived of the idea early on. Hence, the move by India to relinquish its rights in Tibet has to be seen as a calculated move given that the McMahon line, despite being a colonial legacy, was not put up for negotiation. The technicalities of the agreement were worked out in a relatively short period of time (talks were initiated in December 1953 and four months later, the agreement was signed**)** which also implies that there was an urgency underlying the initiative which could only have been political in nature since there were no economic gains or interests to be made or satisfied.

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India's security was also not directly at risk since China was concerned with other threats at the time from within and in the Korean Peninsula. As a result, the agreement on Tibet need not have taken place at all or, alternatively, it could have restricted itself to its functional purpose of clarifying India's status with regards Tibet, minus the preamble which was essentially superfluous.

Instead, by turning the document into an enunciation of visionary principles the treaty was given an unrealistic and unsustainable significance. To claim that Panchasheela was going to act as a code of conduct was foolhardy given that (a) India did not have the defence system in place to ensure its territorial integrity nor (b) an internationally recognised border with China. In essence the agreement relied on goodwill on the part of the Chinese as the superior military force, and India's interpretations of the border, as the 'superior' moral force. Since India's security in the early 1950s was not threatened by China to the point that last measures had to be resorted to, and since India's security was not enhanced by the 1954 agreement, as quickly became apparent, it is possible to conclude that the agreement was primarily a means through which to boost Nehru's prestige as a statesman. It appears therefore, that Panchasheela, despite its visionary content and the visionary proclamations used to promote it, had a clearly instrumental role to play and, was aimed at both audiences at home and abroad. Unfortunately, this instrumental value was directly related to Nehru's kudos and not to serving the security interests of the country.

As summarised in the table below, Panchasheela emerged without any clear historical lineage, both in terms of the principles and logic that it advocated. Largely the brainchild of Nehru and his close advisors, it also was not given adequate room for discussion in the public arena of the constituent or legislative assemblies. To a large extent the topic of foreign policy

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in general and relations with China in particular were, it seems, treated as ‘non-issues’, a policy-making manoeuvre which was to have long-run implications.

Table 6: The Changing Structure of Opportunities and Nehru’s Strategy in Foreign Policy.

PHASE	STRUCTURE OF OPPORTUNITIES	STRATEGY / OUTCOME
1930s Little attention given to foreign policy within Congress Party	Nehru was one of the few Congress leaders to have an interest in international affairs, diplomacy and experience in attending international meetings, extensive foreign travel.	Nehru could establish himself and was regarded as the expert on foreign affairs.
1940 - 47 World War Two & Lead-up to Partition / Transfer of Power	Nehru imprisoned during much of WW2. Nehru, along with others experienced the travails of negotiation.	Nehru came to be seen as India’s international face.
1946 - 50 Constituent Assembly Debates	Foreign Policy remained under-specified but Nehru occupied the limelight on taking Kashmir issue to UN. Congress endorses non-alignment as India’s foreign policy	Nehru projects himself as one of the few able to understand & deal with international politics. Proclaims India’s role is to act as peace-maker and peace-bringer. India was to have a global outlook.
1950 - 1954 October 1950: Chinese ‘liberation’ of Tibet	Criticism of Nehru’s foreign policy in parliament, especially re. China.	Nehru challenges his critics / questions their competence.
Mid-1950s Post-Panchasheela	Critics from both left and right silenced.	Foreign policy becomes a ‘non-issue’ in parliamentary debates.

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The example of Panchasheela demonstrates how Nehru successfully used the structure of opportunities to his advantage. Unlike in the case of Planning, there did not exist as wide a spectrum of well-formed and well-represented alternatives to Nehru's worldview and prognoses. Hence there was no need, nor was it in his interest to encourage any institutional framework for the formulation and conduct of foreign policy, to the extent that foreign policy was turned into a non-issue in parliamentary debates and press conferences. Only with the outbreak of crises such as the 1950 PRC 'liberation' of Tibet or in the build-up to the 1962 war was Nehru's decision-making and foreign policy choices brought under scrutiny. The Panchasheela agreement, it has been argued in this chapter, emerged not so much as a basis for foreign policymaking (it was far too vague in its pronouncements for that) but rather to symbolise the success of Nehru's diplomacy. Serving to silence sceptics and critics both on the Left and the Right, the agreement was a coup for Nehru in the short run but failed to set guidelines for Indian foreign policy in the longer run. What is noteworthy is that despite the highly favourable conditions to mould India's foreign policy according to his preferences, Nehru's legacy in foreign policy unravelled quite early on after his death. Chapter eight will examine further the insight that a lack of constraints produced a legacy that was short-lived.

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Chapter Seven

The Hindu Code Bills

7.1. Introduction: the Puzzle.

7.2. Pre-history: Personal Law and Codification under the British.

7.3. Secularism and Social Reform in Nehru's Vision of modern India.

7.4. The Discourse on Codification.

7.4.1 The Constituent Assembly Debates.

7.4.2 The Interim Legislative Assembly.

7.5. The Structure of Opportunities surrounding the Hindu Code.

7.5.1 The First Lok Sabha (17 April 1952 – 4 April 1957).

7.5.2 Nehru's Changing Position.

7.6. The Substance and Implications of the Hindu Code.

7.7. Conclusion. The Hindu Code legacy: a triumph of strategy over vision?

7.1. Introduction: The Puzzle

Unlike the other two policies, the Hindu Code is an example of Nehru's parachuting onto a policy issue in a policy field where he had next to no practical experience and in a subject area where, prior to independence, he had demonstrated little interest. This chapter examines the process by which Nehru joined the bandwagon, took up the subject of reforming and codifying Hindu law and turned it into a clarion call for social reform and secularism. However, as the political risks became apparent in the early 1950s, the initiative was stalled and temporarily dropped. When the Hindu Code bills were finally passed in the

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mid-fifties[607], the terms of reference had been altered, transforming what was initially supposed to have been a campaign for legal reform, a process of rationalising the legal system, into a grand project of modernisation where Hindus as the majority community were to set an example in the interest of building a secular society.

The extensive debate that has ensued on the nature of secularism in the Indian context, both in terms of written scholarship and amongst policy-makers is indicative of how complex and seriously taken, the issue is. Out of the three policy examples in this thesis, the subject of secularism has generated the most heated discussion and debate. In the 1963 classic, *India as Secular State*, Donald E. Smith had argued that the Constitution of India provided a 'relatively sound basis for the building of a secular state'.[608] Writing at a time when westernisation and modernisation were seen as forces that would *inevitably* encourage the growth of secularism, Smith was convinced that a state drawn from the liberal-democratic tradition of the west could simply be replicated in India. Later writers have discussed the difficulties in separating the religious from the secular. Marc Galanter for example argued that the Indian State was not primarily concerned with promoting freedom of religion but with religious reform.[609] Similarly, Jacobsohn describes the Indian approach towards accommodating religion as an ameliorative model that 'embraces the social reform impulse of Indian nationalism in the context of the nation's deeply rooted religious diversity and stratification'.[610] Rothermund points out the tension within the Constitution relating to group and individual rights, raising the question of how a personal law system can be reconciled with the promise of equal treatment for all. The Hindu Code, as he points out, was meant to

[607] This refers to the Hindu Marriages and Divorce Act, 1955, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 and the Hindu Succession Act, 1956.
[608] Smith, D.E. *India as Secular State* (Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 14.
[609] Galanter, Marc , *Law and Society in Modern India* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1989).
[610] Jacobsohn, G.J. *The Wheel of Law. India's Secularism in Comparative Constitutional Context* (Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 50.

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be a way of modernising Hindu law but it nevertheless still referred to exclusively, group rights.[611]

Outright critics of the state's agenda have included highly respected scholars such as T.N. Madan and Ashis Nandy who call for a more indigenous form of secularism given the all-embracing character of religion in India (more on this perspective follows later in the chapter). Or, as a much earlier scholar, J.Duncan Derrett put it, 'In reality India is a multi-religious state.....A multi-religious conglomeration of peoples can allow great freedom of religion, since the very fact of multi-religiosity proves the seriousness with which the majority accepts the validity, for the whole, of the sincere beliefs of the minorities'.[612] Each of these positions echoes the discussions that were ongoing at the time of independence and the codification of Hindu law became a central issue in the debates on secularism and the role of the state in ensuring equality and freedom to all its citizens.

This chapter follows the same structure as the previous two, beginning with a pre-history of the attempts to codify Hindu law and the evolution of 'personal law'[613] under the British. Nehru's position prior to independence is re-capped and the debate in the constituent assembly on the subject of secularism, personal law and the creation of a uniform civil code, reviewed. Following the trajectory of the Hindu Code bills, tracking the process from recommendation to enactment, an analytic narrative is made of the sequence of events and the shifting balance of power. The discourse of the late forties and early fifties when the

[611] Rothermund, D. *The Role of the State in South Asia and Other Essays*, (Manohar, New Delhi., 2000), p. 93
[612] Derrett, J.D.M. *Religion, Law and the State in India* (Faber and Faber, London, 1968), p. 31.
[613]As opposed to criminal and procedural law, 'personal law' referred to issues of marriage, dowry, dissolution of marriage, parentage and legitimacy, guardianship, adoption, maintenance, gifts, wills, inheritance, succession etc. which were seen by British administrators and legalists as inextricably intertwined with the customs and laws of the separate religious communities.

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codification project was initiated under the stewardship of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar[614] who also chaired the Drafting Committee that was preparing the Indian Constitution, and later, was independent India's first law minister, is compared with that of the mid-fifties when Ambedkar no longer played a role. Unlike the discussions on foreign policy or economic planning, Nehru did not take such an unequivocal public stand in the Lok Sabha debates on the subject of the Hindu Code. Nevertheless he referred to it often in speeches and letters implying that, while he did not have the time, interest or expertise to participate in the parliamentary debates, he was willing to make use of the symbolic value of the Bills, in part perhaps because his administration's record on social reform was, otherwise rather poor.[615]

While the Hindu Code Bills opened up a healthy debate on social reform and set in motion important steps for the emancipation of *Hindu* women, the Bills fell far short of what they were originally supposed to be, a stepping stone towards the enactment of a *uniform* civil code applicable to all citizens of India. It is posited that Nehru and the Congress Party realised it was not in their political interest to press for a uniform civil code hence, the matter was allowed to revolve around reforming retrogressive Hindu practices, generating enough dissent and discussion to keep the process in a stalemate. If Nehru had truly sought to establish an institution that formally endorsed and upheld secularism, he ought to have thrown his weight fully behind the legislation establishing it as the blueprint for a future uniform civil code. Instead, the Hindu Code Bills came to represent a highly contentious and unfinished project, neither paving the way towards greater equality across communities nor,

[614]A reputed jurist and leader in the Dalit movement fighting for the political rights and social freedom of India's untouchables.

[615]If one looks at the list of bills passed by the Constituent Assembly (legislative) there is little that could be construed as social reform, Most bills were concerned with amendments to the law on banking, transport, criminal law, trade. See Kashyap, S.C. *History of the Parliament of India* (Shipra Publications, Delhi, 1995).

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as will be argued below, did it truly facilitate Hindu social reform given numerous loopholes that were engrained in the legislation.

The Hindu Code Bills, in co-existence with the personal law systems of other minority communities, including the Muslims, Christians and Parsees gave rise not only to legal confusions but also provided the substance for a highly polarised debate on what secularism meant in the Indian context, how it was to be nurtured and protected. In the final summary to this chapter it is argued that the uniform civil code was shelved due to political reasons and Nehru, who professed to be a secularist, fell far short in implementing his aspirations. This is comprehendible on account of the fact that he had little experience and knowledge about the matter and as a result, demonstrated limited interest in the subject from the perspective of socio-legal reform. As an issue with political and symbolic significance, Nehru was willing to back and promote the Hindu Code Bills as long as they did not hurt his political fortunes. Although he initially provided the momentum for the project, Nehru ultimately disassociated himself from being actively engaged in the formulation of the bills, with the result that the final outcome bore little resemblance to the intentions proclaimed either by its author, Ambedkar or its interlocutor, Nehru.

7.1. The Prehistory: Personal Law and Codification under the British.

The codification of law was a central component of the British colonial legacy and represented an ambiguous combination of the zeal to modernise with the more cunning dimension of divide and rule politics. Gaining popularity in eighteenth century Britain, under

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the influence of Bentham and Mill's utilitarianism[616], codification was seen as a mechanism through which society could be improved and ordered. Applied to British India, a series of acts were implemented in the 19th century, such as the Code of Civil Procedure (1859), the Penal Code (1860), Code of Criminal Procedure (1861), the Indian Succession Act (1865), the Indian Contract Act (1872).

Despite the rhetoric about modernisation and emancipation, the British Crown refrained from interfering with personal law as this referred to the tradition and customary laws of various communities. This was in part due to a fear of upsetting the communities but also because the British did not want to run the risk of creating the opportunity for a sense of unity and solidarity to emerge across communities. As a result, maintaining the personal law system served the dual purpose of keeping powerful community leaders happy as well as highlighting and upholding differences between communities. In the process it also sought to end the age-old process of syncretism where communities applied a blend of religious customs and habits. By setting down Muslim law for the Muslims and Hindu law for the Hindus the British strengthened and cemented the sense of difference and separation. Thus for example under the 1937 *Shariat* Act[617], it was laid down that Muslims all over British India had to function under Muslim Shariat law, including areas in the North West where previously, elements of Hindu law had been acceptable.

Various Royal Commissions had been set up to study the case of codifying Hindu Law. The first such Commission was formed in 1832 by the House of Commons, following by a second in 1853. The findings of these two Commissions stipulated that legislating

[616] See Stokes, Eric *The English Utilitarians and India* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1959), Chapter One: 'The Doctrine and Its Setting', pp. 1 – 47.
[617] The full act is available online at Yale University: http://www.law.yale.edu/rcw/rcw/jurisdictions/assc/india/India_Musl_Personal.htm. Last seen on 9.09.2008

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personal law was beyond the mandate of the government and even if such powers could be exercised it would stunt the development of Hindu Law. A third and fourth Commission was set up in 1861 and 1875 respectively but they all abandoned the task as impossible.

Unlike the cases of planning and foreign policy however, there was a wide-spread indigenous response to codification, initially led by Indian legislators but also taken up by leaders of the reformist movements that had gained ground during the nineteenth century. One such example is the scholar and lawyer, Dr. Hari Singh Gour, who at the turn of the century had already published extensively on British Indian Law. In 1919 he produced a volume comprising about 1200 pages divided into XXVI chapters containing a 'Hindu Code'. In subsequent attempts to enact Hindu Law, both before and after independence, it was Dr. Gour's Hindu Code that was used as the template.

Broadly speaking, two main systems of Hindu customary law were being used in parallel during the British administration. These were known as the *Dayabhaga* School prevalent in Bengal and the *Mitakshara* School which held sway in other parts of country except Malabar where a matriarchal system was in place. Both texts are believed to have been composed around 1100 AD and came to be used as a point of reference when the British took over legal administration of India, giving rise to what came to be known as 'Anglo-Hindu' law.

To give an impression of how the two systems differed from each other, their diverging views on inheritance is portrayed. According to the *Dayabhaga* School, a son cannot, while his father is living, claim the portion of ancestral property to which he otherwise has a right from the moment of birth. In the *Mitakshara* School on the other hand,

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the son has a right to demand his share at any point in time and even against his father's will. On the death of the father in the *Dayabhaga* system there is an immediate succession, a transfer of property with the sons inheriting. If they chose to keep the inheritance undivided they become 'tenants-in-common', not joint tenants in that each can dispose of his share without the consent of the others. In the *Mitakshara* system there is no succession upon the father's death. The sons enter into possession of the property by right of 'survivorship'. If they remain undivided none of them can dispose of his share without the consent of the others. As. Robert Lingat describes it, 'the two systems correspond to two types of family: the one resembles a patriarchal family in which the father is the sole master of the estate; the other a joint family where the assets are the collective property of the members'.[618] Both systems have a long tradition and can claim the authority of the *smriti*.[619]

7.3. Secularism and Social Reform in Nehru's Vision of modern India

On the subject of religion, Nehru wrote extensively. Lambasting religious beliefs and traditions for the negative effect they had on the capacity for reasoned behaviour, the attack on religion was not however, accompanied by a conscious discussion of *how* the state ought to go about reforming a traditional society. Little attention seems to have been devoted to the highly complex challenge of managing social reform in a population as traditional and diverse as that of India. Even if, as a trained lawyer, Nehru believed in social engineering through legislation, he seems to have not spent much time reflecting upon the difficulties of

[618] Lingat, R. *The Classical Law of India* (Oxford University Press, Third Edition, 2004), p. 174.

[619] *Smriti* translates as 'tradition' and differs as a basis for 'law' from 'revelation' in that it does not claim to have been directly transmitted from a divine source, but to be an indirect perception of law or duty, *dharma*, founded on memory. The *smriti* refer to a complete portion of sacred Hindu literature including the six *Vedangas*, the epics (the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*) and the *Puranas.*

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formulating and implementing such policy. Judging from the amount of space devoted to this subject in Nehru's writing, it would appear that compared with his passion for international politics and world history, as well as the details of planning and strategies for economic development he reflected upon, in the area of social reform Nehru was weak in terms of knowledge about the social conditions of India and not particularly interested in the efforts of past and current social reformers and the challenges they had faced.

Deeply engrained in Jawaharlal was the belief in progress and the need for modernisation. This, as was shown in chapter three, was associated with scientific, rational thought and regarded as the fundamental basis for Europe's supremacy over Asia. Thus, religion and religious ways, particularly of the Hindu caste system, were seen as the obstacles to modernity which had to be dismantled. During the 1930s and 1940s the side-effects of codification were already evident. These included a process of petrification, whereby the endogenous capacity to adapt to the times was stunted and the British found themselves colluding with the more conservative sections of society, codifying and setting in stone the more restrictive interpretations of religious law. Despite this, Nehru refrained from commenting extensively on the subject which suggests that he was not following the debates and discussions of the time. In his efforts later to introduce the Hindu Code Bills, Nehru could have learned from the British experience which demonstrated that codification removed an internal mechanism for change and modification and that legislation involved a process of lobbying that was as likely to promote a more conservative interpretation as it was to generate a progressive one. Furthermore, since Nehru did not initiate any attempt at consensus-building or fact-finding as he had done in the case of planning, the Hindu Code Bill quickly became mired within a highly polarised debate pitting so-called modernists,

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reformists and rationalists against the 'reactionaries', 'revivalists' and luddites of Indian politics.

A further weakness in Nehru's writing is the limited consideration given to the issue of secularism, what the concept meant, whether it had different connotations in Western and non-Western contexts and most importantly, how it could be translated into policy. At no point in the texts considered in chapter three does Nehru discuss the difference between the idea of secularism as religious pluralism, where the state adopts a non-preferentialist stance and, inter-religious tolerance as a social philosophy and, a potential, indigenous form of secularism arising from India's own social, historical experience. As T.N. Madan explains in his book, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds,* the paradox is that 'Indian secularism is indeed religious'[620] given that in the classical Hindu tradition, the ancient texts do not recognise a mutually exclusive dichotomy of the religious *versus* the secular, nor the idea of religion as a private activity. Furthermore the Hindu religious tradition, Madan points out, may be pluralist in character but it exists within a strict hierarchical framework which cannot translate into an ideology of equality. The very real challenge therefore that faced Nehru, and which he did not seem to occupy himself much with, intellectually, was to find social resources, other than Hinduism, to promote an ideology of secularism that valued human reason and agency and rejected religion as fake or, as the 'opium of the masses'.

As Nehru noted much later on and in some frustration, 'We talk about a secular state in India. It is perhaps not very easy even to find a good word in Hindi for 'secular'. Some people think it means something opposed to religion. That obviously is not correct.....It is a

[620] Madan, T.N. *Modern Myths, Locked Minds* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997), p. 197.

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state which honours all faiths equally and gives them equal opportunities'.[621] Nehru's problem however, remained that he could not find an indigenous basis upon which to build a state policy of secularism. Religious pluralism as expressed through inter-religious understanding and mutual respect and which could have found its ground in India's cultural, historical heritage was not enough. Instead Nehru was adamant that the state pursue a policy of neutrality towards all religions but at the same time act as the agent and instrument of public welfare and social advancement.

Critics of Nehru's secular agenda and its long-run impact are not manifold but two stand out: T.N.Madan and Ashis Nandy. Written in the mid and late 1980s, Nandy published a radical critique of ideological secularism and an appeal to recovering religious tolerance. As he put it, 'If secularism is not to become a reformist sect within modernity, (it) must respect and build upon the faiths and visions that have refused to adapt to the modern worldview'.[622] He went on to explain that it is not people of faith but the religious zealots and secularists who are against religious tolerance and religion respectively and who bring about a deadlock.[623] Likewise, T.N.Madan in a critical article in 1987 posited that 'In the prevailing circumstances secularism in South Asia is impossible as a credo of life because the great majority of the people are in their own eyes active adherents of some religious faith. It is impracticable as a basis for state action either because Buddhism and Islam have been declared state or state-protected religions or because the stance of religious neutrality or equidistance is difficult to maintain since religious minorities do not share the majority's view of what this entails for the state. And it is impotent as a blueprint for the future because,

[621] Gopal, S. *Jawaharlal Nehru: an anthology.* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1980), pp. 330 – 1.
[622] Nandy, A. 'An Anti-secularist manifesto', *Seminar* 314 October, p. 2..
[623] See Nandy, A. 'The politics of secularism and the recovery of religious tolerance.' *Alternatives* 13, 1988.

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by its very nature, it is incapable of countering religious fundamentalism and fanaticism'.[624] Nehru nonetheless professed secularism as his credo, putting his faith in the Constitution and the legislative process which, as will be shown below, turned out to produce its own contradictions and obstacles.

7.4. The Discourse on Codification

7.4.1. The Constituent Assembly Debates

The Constitution as it was in 1950 did not contain the word 'secularism' anywhere and the word 'secular' occurred only once to denote a particular religious practice.[625] The additions of 'secular' and 'socialist' to the description of India as a 'sovereign republic' came through the 42nd Amendment in 1976 (during Indira Gandhi's Emergency rule). In the Constituent Assembly Debates, a prominent member, K.T. Shah had tried, through two amendments, to have India declared a secular state. However, B.R. Ambedkar who was piloting the Draft Constitution rejected both proposals on the grounds that it was not advisable to impose a particular form of social organisation on future generations.

A survey of some of the key articles reveals some of the unresolved tensions in the Constitution relating to the challenge of balancing equal rights and duties for all, with the freedom of religion. Articles 25 to 30 (from Part III dealing with 'Fundamental Rights') guarantee 'freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion

[624] Madan, T.N. 'Secularism in its place.', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 1987, Vol. 46/4, p. 748.
[625] Article 25 (2a) under the section on Fundamental Rights states: 'Nothing in this Article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law – regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice.'

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(25), ‘freedom to manage religious affairs’ (26), ‘freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion’ (27), and ‘freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions’ (28). They protect the ‘interests of minorities’ (29), including their ‘right....to establish and administer educational institutions’ (30). However, nowhere does the Constitution of India define the concept of minorities and, clauses such as Articles 29 and 30 have been criticised for implying that minority status is a privilege. Most controversially of all, Article 44 (from Part IV pertaining to the non-justiciable, ‘Directive Principles’) declares that ‘the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India’.

The concurrent application of personal law systems not only stands in the way of a uniform civil code but also clashes with the claim that there are fundamental rights for all guaranteed under the constitution. For example Article 14 which promises equality before law or Article 15 which prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Another tension emerges over whether the Constitution in fact endorses the continuation of the personal law system after independence. Hence while Article 13 of the section on Fundamental Rights states that ‘All laws in force in the territory of India immediately before the commencement of this Constitution in so far as they are inconsistent with the provisions of this Part, shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, by void.’ it was argued that since Article 44 and entry 5 of the Concurrent list[626] recognised different personal codes, it was to be recognised as a distinct category.

[626] Marriage and divorce; infants and minors; adoption; wills, intestacy and succession; joint family and partition; all matters in respect of which parties in judicial proceedings were immediately before the commencement of this Constitution subject to their personal law.

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All in all, the discussions about the need for and the shape of a Hindu Code took place in four different legislating bodies, each with different actors and mandates. Initially, the Rau Committee produced a report in 1944 which was tabled in the Central Legislature. Constituted in 1941 to consider lacunae in the Hindu Women's Property Act (1937)[627], the report recommended a *comprehensive* Code for all Hindus. It was essential to work on an overall code because the Committee found "that the Hindu Law is a complicated organised structure, the various parts of which are inter-connected so that an alteration of one part may involve alteration of others." Piecemeal legislation, it was warned, ran the risk of encouraging contradictions and ambiguity.

The work of the Committee was interrupted by the war and resumed in 1944 and the Report was ultimately submitted to the Legislative Assembly in 1947. Introduced to the Constituent Assembly in 1947 by B.R. Ambedkar, then Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee as well as the interim Law Minister, it was referred to a Select Committee which undertook to rework the clauses. His opening speech summarised the key changes that a Hindu Code proposed to introduce: 'this Bill, the aim of which is to codify the rules of Hindu law which are scattered in innumerable decisions of the High Courts and of the Privy Council, which form a bewildering motley to the common man and give rise to constant litigation, seeks to codify the law relative to seven different matters'.[628] The seven areas and the proposed changes as seen by Ambedkar are listed in the table below.

[627] The Rau Committee's terms of reference consisted of the following:

(1) to examine the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act, 1937 and to suggest amendments to the Act as it would (1) resolve the doubt felt as to construction of that Act, (2) clarify the nature of the right conferred by the Act upon the widow and , (3) remove any injustice that may have been done by the Act to the daughter.; and,

(2) to examine and advice upon (1) the law of inheritance Bill and (2) the Hindu Women's Right to separate Residences and Maintenance Bill.

[628] CAD legislative debates Vol. IV 9th April, 1947 as reproduced in Moon, V. (ed.) *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 14 /1 (Education Department, Government of Maharahstra, 1995), p. 5.

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Table 7: The Hindu Code and existing legislation.
(as reproduced in Moon, V. (ed.) *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 14 /1 (Education Department, Government of Maharahstra, 1995)

Area of Legislation	Proposed reform
Rights of Property of deceased Hindu who has died intestate without making a will, male and female.	The Hindu Code adopted the *Dayabhag* rule, under which the property is held by the heir as his personal property with an absolute right to dispose it of either by gift or by will or any manner. (Different from the *Mitakashara* system where the property of a Hindu is not his individual property but belongs to a 'coparcenary' consisting of father, son, grandson and great grandson. All these have birth-right in property which passes on anyone member of the coparcenary through survivorship to the members that are left and not to any heirs of the deceased.) On intestate succession to females: Consolidation of different categories of *stridhan*[629] into one single category of property and with a uniform rule of succession. Sons are given a right to inherit the *stridhan* and are given half the share which the daughter takes. Gives the woman 'absolute' rights to do what she likes with the property after her death (previously it had to go back to relatives of husband) Property given as dowry to be treated as a trust property.
General order of succession.	Adoption of *Dayabhag* rule where succession is based on heir-ship through blood relations and not based on cognate or agnatic relations. Daughter and widow of a pre-deceased son are given same rank as son in inheritance. Daughter is given share of father's property Recognition of much larger number of female heirs. The mother succeeds before in preference to the father.
Laws of maintenance	Dependents of deceased entitled to claim maintenance from those who inherit property. Recognises that wife may live away from husband and separate maintenance can be granted. Conditions when wife

[629] Refers to the woman's wealth in Classical Hindu Law.

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	can claim maintenance: if husband is (1) suffering from loathsome disease (2) if he keeps a concubine (3) if he is guilty of cruelty, (4) if he has abandoned her for two years (5) if he has converted to another religion (6) any other cause justifying her living separately.
Laws of marriage	Recognition of sacramental and civil marriage. Conditions for both not so different but registered marriage must be registered in accordance with provisions in the Bill while sacramental marriage may be registered if parties wish to do so. The Bill dispenses with identification of caste and sub-caste for a valid sacramental marriage / identity of *gotrapravara*[630] is not a bar to marriage / Monogamy is prescribed.
Laws of Divorce.	Introduced law for dissolution of marriage: -declaration of marriage null and void -have marriage declared invalid -dissolution of marriage. Grounds for Invalidation: if one party living at time of marriage with another spouse / if relation of parties within ambit of prohibited-degrees / impotency / parties being *sapinda*[631] / parties are lunatic / guardian's consent obtained by force or fraud / Grounds for divorce: Desertion/ conversion to another religion / keeping of a concubine or becoming a concubine / incurably unsound mind / virulent and incurable leprosy / venereal disease in communicable form / cruelty.
Laws of Adoption.	Husband will have to obtain consent from wife. If a widow wants to adopt, she can only do so if there are positive instructions left by the husband authorising her to do so through a registered deed or provision in a will.
Laws of Minority and Guardianship.	Nothing new.

[630] *Gotra*s, 18 in all, are patrilineal clans whose members claim descent from Hindu Sages and hence usually restricted to the Brahmin section of society. In classical Hindu law intermarriage was banned between kin in the patrilineal line of descent from putative *gotra* ancestors.

[631] A person is said to be a *Sapinda* of the other if they are connected by a blood tie as far as the third generation in the line of ascent in the case of a mother and fifth generation in the case of a father.

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Ambedkar is the pivotal figure at this time because of his close involvement in revising the Rau Committee report. There were also a number of other important voices expressing scepticism or support for the Hindu Code, providing a useful insight into the public discourse, which on the whole, was more unanimous in its views than in subsequent legislatives. As seen from the news papers then, this was carefully followed, with regular reports detailing the positions of various speakers. Whilst the news paper reports are not analytical or reflective in the least, they do demonstrate that the debates were publicised. This is important because this represented one of the ways through which individuals, charting out their political careers in independent India for the first time, could make their positions and views known to a broader public.[632] So, the speeches being made in the constituent assembly were also directed at an external audience and thus have the value of being an indicator of how broad sections of society might have thought at the time.

The objections raised at this point covered a wide gamut of opinions, ranging from the more conservative and orthodox representatives, to those who felt the Bill did not go far enough. Amongst the 'orthodox' fears were that the introduction of women's shares would introduce litigation and ultimately lead to the destruction of the joint family system and the argument that Hindu law had a divine origin and ought not to be played around with. On technical grounds, the legitimacy of the Constituent Assembly to legislate on such matters was questioned as well as the legal problem of agricultural land being beyond the purview of the House given that it qualified as a Provincial subject.[633] Various members expressed concern over the fact that a secular State ought not to be legislating on matters with religious implications and especially when the legislation referred only to one community.[634] In

[632] See for example Hindustan Times at the time.
[633] CAD (leg) debates, 9th April, 1948.
[634] Ibid.

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addition the challenge of uniformity was further highlighted by the question of whether tribal communities, classified as Hindu because they were not Muslim, Christian or Parsee, would agree to abide by codified *Hindu* laws.[635]

Nevertheless the views expressed in this first round of debates on the Hindu Code after independence reflected procedural concerns about the implications of such a code but was not marked by polemics. Ambedkar himself, responding to the first round of queries and criticism answered pragmatically, 'I believe there is no necessity that a uniform law of inheritance should apply to all sorts of property. Property varies in its nature, varies in its importance in the social life of the community and consequently….Indian or Hindu society may come to the conclusion that land which is the foundation of its economic life had better be governed by the law of primogeniture so that neither the junior sons nor females may take part in the inheritance'.[636]

Shortly after this, in November 1948, article 35 (the future article 44 enunciating a uniform civil code) in the draft constitution came up for discussion. A strong Muslim position emerged on the issue of personal law. For instance Mr. Mohamad Ismail Sahib from the Muslim constituency of Madras proclaimed that, "The right of a group, or a community of people to follow and adhere to its own personal law is among the fundamental rights and this provision should really be made amongst the statutory and justiciable fundamental rights…..Now the right to follow personal law is part of the way of life of those people who are following such laws; it is part of their religion and part of their culture….The secular

[635] Ibid.
[636] Ibid.

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State, which we are trying to create should not do anything to interfere with the way of life and religion of the people".[637]

Another member categorically stated, 'as far as Mussalmans are concerned, their laws of accession, inheritance, marriage and divorce are *completely dependent* upon their religion'.[638] A general mood of suspicion with regards the intentions of a uniform civil code prevailed. As mentioned above it is important to remember that speakers were catering to a wider audience than that of the assembly. Mr. B.Pocker Sahib Bahadur, a Muslim candidate from Madras demanded to know, "the real intention with which the clause has been introduced. If the words "Civil Code" are intended only to apply to matters of procedure like the Civil Procedure Code and such other laws which are uniform so far as India is concerned at present, well nobody has any objection to that, but the various civil Court Acts in the various provinces, well I would only say, Sir, that it is a tyrannous provision which ought not to be tolerated".[639]

Two lone voices who stood up for the uniform civil code were B.R. Ambedkar and K.M. Munshi[640], who pointed out that (a) the idea that personal law was somehow an intrinsic part of religion, was a British legacy and, (b) that there was nothing immutable about either Hindu or Muslim law.[641] These discussions demonstrate that there was a strong Muslim opposition to any form of intervention by the State in the realm of personal law. Whilst the

[637] 23rd November, 1948, Constituent Assembly Debates (CAD) Volume 2, pp. 540 – 1.
See also Mr. Naizuruddin Ahmad: p. 541.
Mahboob Ali Baig Sahib Bahadur: p. 543.
[638] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. 8, pp. 543 – 6, pp. 722 – 3.
[639] 23rd November, 1948 CAD, Volume 2, p. 544.
[640] See J. H. Dave, et al., *Munshi: His Art and Wor1d* (Bombay, 1956), 4 vols. Munshi was Home Minister of Bombay under the British, a principal architect of the Constitution, and after independence Food and Agriculture Minister at the centre and later, Governor of Uttar Pradesh.
[641] See 23rd November, 1948, CAD, Volume 2, p. 548 and pp. 550 – 1.

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idea of a uniform civil code was tolerated as a non-justiciable Directive Principle, it was made sure that personal laws were protected via the Concurrent List, entry 5 in the 7th Schedule.

7.4.2. The Interim Legislative Assembly.

The next arena in which the Hindu Code was specifically addressed was in the interim legislative assembly when Ambedkar's revised draft was tabled for discussion in February 1949. This seems to be the stage at which clear divisions emerged and when members questioned the legitimacy of the assembly to legislate on such matters. Responding to the challenge, Nehru made one of his first statements on the subject: "We do attach the greatest importance to it, as I said, not because of any particular clause or anything, but because of the basic approach to the vast problem in this country which is intimately allied to other problems, economic and social. We have achieved political freedom in this country, political independence. That is a stage in the journey and there are other stages, economic, social and others, and if society is to advance, there must be this integrated advance on all fronts. One advance on one front and being kept back on other fronts means functioning imperfectly and also means that the first advance also is in danger. Therefore, we have to consider this matter in this spirit, how we should advance on all fronts, always keeping in view of course, that the advance is coordinated and meets with the approval of the great majority of the population….".[642] In the face of continued opposition and demands that the Hindu Code Bill be made applicable to every Indian[643], Nehru's suggestion was to 'put an end to the present

[642] 15 December, 1949, reproduced in *Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 14/1, pp. 763 – 4.

[643] For instance: Shri Jhunjhunwala: "When a particular kind of legislation is being enacted for the welfare of the people, which should it be restricted wholly to a certain class of persons and why should it not be extended to all? …And if it is bad why should we apply it to the Hindus? Why should we thrust it upon the Hindus? Why should they not be left free to practice their own religion and act according to their own ancient ideas?...I would

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stage of consideration of this motion by adopting it, and then the House may permit the Government to take those informal steps which I have indicated in regard to consultation about the various parts and clauses".[644] By 'informal steps', Nehru was referring to his suggestion that he speak off the record to individuals who had objections or concerns about the bill.

When the discussion was resumed in the interim legislature in February, 1951 the positions had hardened further, resulting in a complete deadlock on the subject in which out of the 28 speakers, 23 opposed the Bill. In September 1951 when an attempt was made to break the Code down into separate sections and to consider just part 22 relating to Divorce and Monogamy the discussion had to be abandoned with just 4 clauses passed. On September 27th, 1951 Ambedkar resigned from his cabinet position as Law minister, citing amongst other reasons, his frustration with the slow progress on the issue of the Hindu Code Bill and directly blaming the Prime Minister for dragging his feet.[645]

Anticipating the newly elected, first Lok Sabha, President Rajendra Prasad, delivered his Presidential Address on 6 August, 1951. In his speech he mentioned the Hindu Code as an important concern of the new government. Given that he was one of the more outspoken and powerful critics of the Hindu Code (see below) it is likely that he was under instructions to make a mention of it in, what was after all, a historical and highly publicised speech. However, the limit of Nehru's influence is indicated in the fact that President Rajendra Prasad only mentioned the Bill in passing, right at the end of a speech which had gone on at length into details about Korea, the need for five year planning and the goal of abolishing the

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like to know why it should not apply to everybody and why it should apply only to Hindus?" (*Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 14/2 p. 829).

[644] 15 December, 1949, *Ambedkar 's Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 14/1, pp. 763 – 4.

[645] Reproduced in *Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 15.

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zamindari system.[646] Given that Nehru had emphasised the great social, cultural and international importance of the Hindu Code it seems surprising that the only reference to it in the President's address was as 'a bill, which has long been before Parliament for some years..My Government hope that this will be passed during this session'.[647]

The debates in the first Lok Sabha, over the years of 1954 and 1955, leading up to the enactment of the four Hindu Code Bills are important in demonstrating how the terms of debate had moved. Through the select committee and constituent assembly days, a core element of the debate had been the issue of religion and questions regarding the extent to which the State might be justified to intervene on personal law were heavily discussed. The discourse of the mid-1950s however, was much more focused on the need to reform Hindu law because of its entrenched inequities and archaic social customs. Lauding the importance of the acts for Hindu women, the discussion of whether the Hindu Code was to be a precursor to a Uniform Code or, whether it would act as a model for the reform of other personal law systems was considerably reduced. This is an intriguing change in the discourse and reflects the evolving configuration of power relationships within the Congress party as well as in the legislative, to which the chapter now turns.

7.5. The Structure of Opportunities surrounding the Hindu Code.

7.5.1. The First Lok Sabha (17 April 1952 – 4 April 1957)

In 1952 the decision was made to split up the Hindu Code and to work on it in a piecemeal fashion. This, it was claimed would speed up the process and enhance the

[646] Lok Sabha Debates, 6 August 1951, Columns 17 – 28.
[647] Ibid., Column 27.

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likelihood of it being passed. It was over this decision that Ambedkar finally resigned in frustration and it is surprising that the government, having won a thumping majority in the 1952 elections (see chapter four) did not feel confident enough of passing a Bill in its entirety through parliament. According to the model applied in the thesis, Nehru's behaviour can be explained using strategic reasons based on the political constraints of the time: (a) he was not yet sure of being able to garner support on what had become a controversial issue within the party and, (b) he was unwilling to risk a defeat in public and hence, took a calculated decision to opt for the piecemeal approach. This tactical reasoning is borne out by the fact that Nehru did not invest much time in discussing the substance of the Hindu Code and the details of the individual bills. If he had done so he would have realised the deep contradictions contained within the clauses and the problems these posed in the implementation of such legislation. Both of these points are explored further in the sections below.

The decision to split the Hindu Code into separate bills delayed the process by allowing each to become bogged down in controversy, the same objections being voiced repeatedly. The discussions were to a large extent an unnecessary repetition of the clause-by-clause considerations undertaken by the interim legislature in 1950. Furthermore, during the process of reconsidering the clauses, now in the form of separate Bills, Nehru made next to no comments in the debates. By not explicitly throwing his weight behind the Hindu Code in this second avatar, yet supporting the piecemeal approach, Nehru's ambiguous position resulted in a set of contradictions and weaknesses. For instance, as a result of the Bill by Bill and Clause by Clause breakdown, the discussions and objections centred upon details and minutiae and not upon the wider question of whether this was paving the way for a uniform civil code, as recommended in the Constitution.

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Beginning with the Hindu Marriage and Divorce Bills, then-Law Minister Biswas explained, 'There is nothing to prevent any two Hindus marrying under the ordinary law. This Bill seeks to amend the ordinary law so as to make certain portions of it compulsory. (for example) ....if this Bill becomes law, every Hindu marriage must be a monogamous marriage....We want to make monogamy compulsory as a rule of law for all Hindu marriages'.[648] What is noteworthy is that at the end of this discussion the Law Minister himself stated, 'In fact I was wondering if I should not have a general law which will apply not merely to Hindus but to all, and will provide that upon marriage there should be equal distribution of property between the partners'.[649] In subsequent debates, the government's position gradually shifted to being against the idea of a Uniform Civil Code and, went out of its way to assuage fears of legislation that would impose restrictions and bestow rights uniformly across all communities.

The next component of the Hindu Code to come under discussion in the Lok Sabha was the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Bill. Introducing it to the House was the new Law Minister Pataskar who, pre-empting the question 'Why is this Bill confined only to Hindus?', proposed that, 'A common uniform code is no doubt our objective and if I can say so, this is a step in the right direction. Let us try to have one common uniform code for the Hindus themselves'.[650] This was not a very satisfactory answer given that it did not explain why, Hindu Law had to be codified first, why no action was being taken with regards other systems of personal law, nor why no discussion was being encouraged by the government on the likelihood and practicality of a uniform civil code. Although the Hindu Code was meant to act as a blueprint for other personal law systems, none of the others (neither Muslim,

[648] Biswas, Lok Sabha Debates 13 May 1954, Column 7374.
[649] Ibid., Column 7386.
[650] Pataskar, Lok Sabha Debates, 8 December 1954, Column 2236 – 7.

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Christian or Parsee**)** underwent a similarly rigorous process of scrutiny and a clause by clause examination.

Strong criticism was voiced by Lok Sabha member Deshpande whose arguments are useful to highlight for their wide-spread resonance at the time. As Deshpande put it, 'In this country I find a tendency amongst people that whenever the Hindu Code Bill comes, everybody becomes very enthusiastic and says that now we are starting a crusade against everything that is old, everything that is reactionary, everything that is feudal, and so progress will come.'[651] Deshpande described how polarised the debate had become by the mid-fifties: 'When we come to oppose it, we are called communalists and reactionaries, or reactionary communalists, and those who support it are the secularists, non-communalist and the nationalistic legislators'.[652] As Desphande pointed out, the efforts of the Government did not seem to be directed at consolidating a secular and strong state but rather to 'shun everything that is Hindu'.[653] Whilst this may have been an exaggerated claim it is true that through the Hindu Code Bill the Government sought to introduce radical changes to traditional Hindu society, striking at its roots such as the joint family system. For example through the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Bill the aim was to limit guardians to just the father and mother, by abolishing any *de facto* guardians, thus ruling out the age-old custom of elder brothers, uncles, grandparents taking over as guardians in the eventuality. Another valid observation that was made by Deshpande was the lack of statistics and data. If the Government was so convinced about the evils of polygamy and the need to protect against it, then it ought to have conducted a survey to identify the extent to which it was being practiced by Hindus. Simply

[651] Deshpande, Lok Sabha Debates, 8 December, 1954, Column 2246.
[652] Ibid., Column 2248.
[653] Ibid., Column 2249.

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to declare it a social evil, embedded in Hindu practice without providing any proof was a simplistic and casual way of going about such fundamental social reform.

Other oddities in this Bill which reflect the tensions released when the State starts to involve itself explicitly in defining and setting limits to tradition and culture, lay in the definition of, to whom the Bill applied. Clause two, it was pointed out, stated 'This Act applies to any person who is a Hindu by religion in any of its forms or developments including Lingayats, Brahmos, Prathansamajists or Arya Samajists'.[654] Whether the Arya Samajists would appreciate being treated as Hindus by inclusion only, became a point of contention in the discussion as well as the question of where Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs were to be fitted in. A proposal from a member of the House was to simplify and clarify the definition by simply stating that 'except for the communities mentioned, all persons domiciled in India may be governed by this Act'.[655]

As one of the main voices supporting the Hindu Code, B.C. Das defended the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Bills on the grounds that the Bill had a clear social perspective which aimed at giving the mother her rightful place.[656] However, the arguments that Das ended up using to justify his position were indicative of the thorny parameters that had come to frame this debate. The discussion quickly turned into an argument over the merits and demerits of Hinduism and the more general issue of the role religion was to play within the political arena. The need to consider these themes was of course pressing at the time when the nation was in the process of giving substance to its constitution. However, using a Bill that attempted to squeeze religious stipulations into a secular form, as the basis for such a

[654] Tek Chand, Lok Sabha Debates, 8 December, 1954, Column 2262.
[655] S.Kripalani, Lok Sabha Debates, 8 December, 1954, Column 2287.
[656] B.C.Das, Lok Sabha Debates, 8 December, 1954, Column 2271.

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discussion was bound to cause confusion. For example Das' logic brought him to the scenario where a father may decide to change his religion and as a result, being then a non-Hindu he would lose the right to become guardian of his child. As he put it rather provocatively, 'According to the present law, a person even if he changes his religion, he can continue to be the guardian. What do you require? A Hindu or a citizen?'.[657] This is precisely the crux of the matter for, was the Hindu Code Bill seeking to produce 'better' *Hindus* or 'better' *citizens*? 'Better' *Hindu citizens* might have been the answer but how was that to be reconciled with the ideal of a secular nation-state?

Obviously, if the Hindu Code Bill was concerned with Hindu Law, the persons who claimed its jurisdiction had to be and continue to be Hindus but this caused consternation amongst members who raised questions about whether the child in question had to be brought up as a Hindu and whether this meant being an orthodox Hindu? 'Religion', Das argued 'can take care of itself. No religion can sustain itself if it remains stuck up in the mud, if it cannot move with the people, if it cannot keep pace with the times, and a religion which cannot keep pace with the times is dead'.[658] Das urged the Government not to be timid in introducing social measures and to have a clear perspective but this was precisely the weakness of the Hindu Code, its intentions were inherently ambiguous. A possible solution, as suggested by a parliamentary member, Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani, would have been to amend the existing Guardians and Wards Act[659], instead of introducing an entirely new Bill.[660]

Another valid criticism pointed out by various speakers was the fact that more often than not it was the demerits of Hinduism that were highlighted and the need to modernise, to

[657] Ibid., Column 2269.
[658] Ibid., Column 2271.
[659] Passed in 1890, this was already quite a comprehensive act.
[660] S.Kripalani, Lok Sabha Debates, 9 December, 1954, Column 2286.

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fit in with the times that was emphasized. What such standard tirades ignored were the practices that had evolved over time precisely in response to local conditions. It was possible to conceive of these serving a purpose in the new nation, of providing a foundation for stability and a backbone of continuity during times of sudden change and limited resources. As Sucheta Kripalani pointed out, 'In our system today, the joint family system may be very bad, but it still persists. That system has got some good features also....in the Indian society as it is situated today, we have got unemployment, our income is not very high, the financial needs are there. With all these things, it is absolutely imperative that certain members of the family should be looked after by other members. It is a kind of socialistic system in a way, in a crude form maybe, that in a joint family the weakest members of the family are looked after. Now, here we have not recognised the joint family at all'.[661] Contrast this argument with Nehru's view of the joint-family which he described as being a 'relic of a feudal age, utterly out of keeping with modern conditions".[662]

A number of legal arguments were launched against the Bills individually and generally. Codification it was posited, was not the ideal, for it encouraged a 'process of petrificaction....for when you codify and it gets some interpretation our doctrinaire decisions comes into play and law becomes static and law becomes unprogressive'.[663] On practical grounds, some members cautioned against formulating laws in a country which lacked the resources to implement them. N.C. Chatterjee pointed out, 'A man coming from one part of a country may have to travel 250, 300 or 400 miles before he can come to a High Court, and you know in every High Court, it is much more costly than in District Courts'.[664]

[661] Ibid., Column 2290.
[662] Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru Selected Works*, vol. 3, p. 339.
[663] N.C.Chatterjee, Lok Sabha Debates, 9 December, 1954, Column 2299.
[664] N.C.Chatterjee, Lok Sabha Debates, 9 December, 1954, Column 2309.

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Responding to the various points raised in the discussion Law Minister, Pataskar's defence centred upon the charge (which he made at various occasions) that, 'on an analysis of what I have been able to hear, I find that suspicion, prejudice and misconception are at the bottom of many of the criticisms which have been levelled at this Bill'.[665] Labelling the opponents or critics of the Hindu Code Bills as obscurantist, bigoted or simply plain ignorant was to have a polarising effect: those supporting the Bill representing the liberal, reformist minded section of society versus the obstructionist and obscurantist zealot. It must be noted that in the 1954 debates, the voices of criticism and the demands for clarification far exceeded those who were in favour of the Bills.

In one of the final discussions on the Hindu Marriage Bill in April 1955, Law Minister Pataskar once again summarised the purpose of the bill which revolved around the fact that, 'codification is in the best interests, (it) could make the law certain and at the same time mark the progress that has taken place in what has now come to be called the Hindu society'.[666] On both counts this was challenged, as the Bills instead of providing certainty raised a number of contradictory interpretations as well as inviting criticism that the principles codified did not always represent the most progressive elements of Hindu law. Referring to the need to rectify the imbalance in rights and privileges enjoyed by men compared to women, Pataskar also described the act to be 'a measure of social importance'.[667]

The reasons that the Government put forward in defence of the Hindu Code Bills are manifold and, at times contradictory. On 2 May 1955, in one of the last debates on the Hindu

[665] Pataskar, Lok Sabha Debates, 9 December 1954, Column 2348.
[666] Pataskar, Lok Sabha Debates, 26 April 1955, Column 6469.
[667] Ibid., Column 6500.

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Marriage Bill, Law Minister Pataskar argued that the bill aimed at removing the anomalies which were the result of foreign administration and which had established a system where 'Hindu law as at present is not the law laid down by the *Smriti*, but is the law which for hundred years was laid down by judges, who, because they did not know any *Shastras*, took the advice of pundits; and these pundits also differed'.[668] As a result the Government proclaimed to be acting as a social reformer and at the same time, claimed that it wanted to preserve, even revive a purer form of Hindu law. Such an attempt to disarm opposition was a fine line to tread and ended up producing criticism from conservatives, who found the bills disrespectful of Hindu traditions and beliefs, as well as from progressives, who lambasted the bill for not being radical enough. By 1955 the arguments of the government had grown very confused. On the one hand there was the claim that it was acting towards a secularisation of law, where the intention to introduce uniformity was meant to aid a secular state in administering the law. At the same time, the extensive references by the Law Minister himself to issues like whether *samskar* was equal to sacrament in Hinduism, drew religion directly into the heart of the discussion.

Although each of the acts that were to constitute the Hindu Code, were discussed separately, there needed to be an internal consistency to make them compatible with each other. Hence the definition as to *whom* the law would be applicable had to be made crystal clear. Secondly, in terms of the application of the Act it had to be evident as to how the Hindu Code version differed from existing common law. What seems to have dogged the Law Minister's response throughout the discussion on the various Acts, is the underlying confusion of why, if this was being done in the name of secularism, was it thought necessary to codify only Hindu Law. If the implication was then that Christian, Parsee and Muslim

[668] Pataskar, Lok Sabha Debates, 2 May 1955, Column 7423.

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personal law did not need codifying, then the objective should have been clearly articulated as the need to bring clarity to Hindu Law and introducing a measure of uniformity across the numerous Hindu communities in the different areas of marriage, inheritance, guardianship and divorce.

However, the process was complicated by the reformist undertone which sought to modernise Hindu law and the project of bringing it into conformity with changed social circumstances. This is the position that Nehru seemed to adopt for he was not interested in the details of the legislation but simply the argument that, to attain a modern state, certain social habits had to be removed or, instilled in its population. That he refrained from applying the same principles to other communities indicates that his approach was tactical rather than being driven by overarching reformist principles. To examine this contention more closely the following section depicts the shifting stance of Nehru and the compromises he was willing and not willing to undertake.

7.5.2. Nehru’s changing position

Between the years of 1950 and 1955 Nehru was able to position himself in such a way as to emerge as the unchallenged leader of the Indian National Congress. This was by no means inevitable given the fact that there were rival factions within the party and other strong, respected political figures. It is therefore interesting to study the evolving balance of power through the prism of the Hindu Code Bills which at one point turned into an issue of brinkmanship. When Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel died on 15 December, 1950, the most viable contender for leadership was removed. With Patel gone, Nehru had to find a way of asserting his leadership amongst Patel’s followers and to do so without exacerbating factionalism

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within the party. Following a strategy he had honed during his days of pre-independence Congress politics, Nehru was able to combine moral grandstanding and public proclamations with moderation and compromise when it came to translating his declarations into party resolutions or government policy, in order to avoid controversy. Thus, in the case of the Hindu Code, Nehru made important statements committing himself and the party to the project but as seen from above, progress on the bills was slow, and in the end had to be postponed to a time when there was a more pliable cabinet and Lok Sabha, following the 1952 elections.

Nehru's correspondence with President Rajendra Prasad about the Hindu Code is incisive and sheds light on the internal power struggles that were occurring.[669] Writing in July 1948 in response to the discussions being held in the interim assembly about a Hindu Code, Prasad contended that the proposal had not been considered at a party meeting and that to hurry things without going through a proper discussion, the proposal had been put up for a second reading on the last day of the assembly's session, during the last hour and was then simply referred to a Select Committee. This implied a deliberate attempt to bypass the normal process of debate and dialogue that ought to accompany a bill under consideration before the party tabled it in the legislative body.

In his reply Nehru argued strongly in defence of the Hindu Code, "To try to smother it now or postpone it would create some kind of a crisis and the reputation of the Congress would undoubtedly be affected. As it is, it is being stated widely that the Congress is a reactionary and a very conservative body now, which dares not face any radical change. We are called not only socially reactionary but a police state which suppresses civil liberties and

[669] See Choudhary, V. (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*. (Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1984).

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the like. In this context if we push out this bill, we shall not only confirm this growing conviction of our excessive conservatism in India but would also go down in the mind of foreigners outside India".[670] Apart from taking into account the loss of reputation, Nehru posited that the question was one of merit: "The Cabinet has declared itself in favour of it twice at least. Personally I am entirely in favour of the general principles embodied in it. Are we therefore to give up something that we consider right and on which so much labour has been spent, because some people object?"[671]

In response, contending that the dispute was as much about content as about procedure, Prasad stated that he did not know "when and where we made a promise or gave an assurance about the Bill (relating to the Hindu Code). If any assurance was given to the Constituent Assembly by the Government, the objection to the competence of these bodies to take up this matter at this time and during this session without any reference to the electorate remains".[672] Prasad had always questioned the mandate of an unelected assembly to rule on such crucial matters. Furthermore, as he pointed out, and which Nehru later admitted, the Congress had not spent much time discussing the idea of a Hindu Code or codification itself as a principle. Nehru's retort was to argue that the issue had been in the public domain for the last two or three years and could have been raised for internal consideration. Why, he did not raise the topic is left unclear. His reply to Prasad consisted of the following: "It is perfectly true that the AICC or the Working Committee have not considered it. Nor is it in the election manifesto. Normally such matters of legislation have not been considered by the Working Committee or the AICC. Considering that this question has been before the country for the

[670] Nehru to Prasad, 22 July, 1948 in Gopal, S. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Volume 7, Second Series, p. 499.
[671] Ibid. p. 500.
[672] Prasad to Nehru, 24. 07. 1948 in Choudhary, V. (ed.) *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, (Allied Publishers Ltd, New Delhi, 1986), Vol. 9, pp. 240 – 1.

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last 2 or 3 years, if members of the AICC or the Working Committee wished to consider them, they could certainly have done so. This applies to the party too, which has been watching every stage of this legislation, and yet did not consider it worthwhile to discuss it at a formal party meeting when any member could have brought it forward".[673]

Nevertheless, sensing the internal discontent regarding the bill and probably realising that it would not be a popular electoral subject, Nehru found ways to hold up the process and to postpone consideration of the Bill till after the general elections. Explaining his strategy to Ambedkar in a letter in February 1949, "I feel we should try our utmost to make passage of the Bill easy. There is obviously a great deal of opposition to the bill both in the House and in the country. We may pass the Bill in spite of this opposition. But that will mean two things: (1) continuous opposition and delay in the passage and possibly success I preventing it from passing this year, (2) obstruction in the implementation of the Bill when passed….Because of this, I told the executive meeting of the party that while I was opposed to any further references to the old or to a new Select Committee or to further circulation, I was prepared to have certain controversial clauses in the Bill informally considered by members interested. We are not going to have a clause by clause consideration of the Bill during this Session. There is no chance of this being done till the autumn Session. That means that we have got about 6 months. During this period we might well arrange for this informal consideration of special clauses of the Bill. Persons consulted may be some of the members of the old Select committee or some other also. If necessary we might even consult some non members. It has been suggested to me that perhaps some judges might be consulted…I think that this

[673] Nehru to Prasad, 27 July 1948 (GOPAL, Volume 7, Second Series), p, 501.

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procedure will facilitate the passage of the Bill. We may modify some provisions somewhat and gain larger approval".[674]

The rather cavalier manner in which Nehru refers to modifying some provisions and putting up controversial clauses for informal discussions must have enraged Ambedkar who had invested time and effort in preparing the lengthy document containing a revised version of the original Code that had been produced by the Rau Committee.

At this point therefore, in February 1949, it seems Nehru was already thinking of ways to avoid the controversy that was likely to be generated over the Hindu Code within the assembly session. Such an attitude suggests that Nehru had not realised the immensity of the issue at stake and had not really taken seriously the extensive discourse it had already generated in the Constituent Assembly debates. Hence he was unable to envisage the concerns and roadblocks it was likely to produce. This appears in stark contrast to the importance that Ambedkar had given to the project and the deep significance that it contained for him not only as an act of reforming illiberal practises in Hindu society but also as a step towards laying the ground for a uniform civil code.

Arguing from the lawyer's point of view, Ambedkar in fact had a much clearer argument for why the Hindu Code was necessary and would be beneficial. Rather than speak in grand terms of the need to modernise and do away with the vestiges of tradition and the blinkers of religious dogmatism, Ambedkar's logic was practical and straightforward: "Coming to the question of saving personal law…..The religious conceptions in this country are so vast that they cover every aspect of life, from birth to death. There is nothing which is

[674] Nehru to Ambedkar, Feb 26, 1949 (Gopal, Volume 1, Second Series) p. 326.

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not religion and if personal law is to be saved, I am sure about it that in social matters we will come to a standstill. I do not think it is possible to accept a position of that sort. There is nothing extraordinary in saying that we ought to strive hereafter to limit the definition of religion in such a manner that we shall not extend beyond beliefs and such rituals as may be connected with ceremonials which are essentially religious. It is not necessary that the sort of laws, for instance, laws relating to tenancy or laws relating to succession should be governed by religion.[675] By late 1951 Ambedkar had resigned in frustration, first from the cabinet in September and then from parliament in October.

Despite discussions in the assembly having been stalled, Nehru maintained in public that he was committed to and deeply convinced about the necessity of bringing about a Hindu Code. In his presidential address of October, 1951 to the Congress party he claimed that, "In India we have these conflicts between reactionary and static elements and dynamic and progressive forces. Essentially, it is on the economic plane, but it touches the social life of the people in many ways. *Thus, the Hindu Code Bill, which has given rise to so much argument, becomes a symbol of this conflict between progress and reaction in the social domain.* (italics added) I do not refer to any particular clause of that Bill, which might or might not be changed, but rather to the spirit underlying that Bill. This was a spirit of liberation and of freeing our people and, more especially, our womenfolk, from outworn customs and shackles that bound them. We cannot progress along one front and remain tied up on other fronts. We have therefore, to keep in view this idea of integrated progress on all fronts, political, economic and social".[676]

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675 Moon, V. (ed) *Ambedkar's Writing and Speeches*, (Education Department, Maharashtra, 1995) Vol. 13, p, 405.

676 See Zaidi, A. *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*; (Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1980), Volume 14, pp. 241 – 255.

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Speaking to a press conference in Allahabad on 15 January, 1952 Nehru explained, "So far as the Hindu Code Bill is concerned, it consists of certain principles and a mountain of details. A very great part of it is mere codification. Hardly any part of it is a complete innovation. An attempt has been made in it to bring about a measure of uniformity keeping in view at the same time the different customs that have developed through the ages. There is nothing in it, so far as I know, and so far as many learned men in the Hindu Law and the Shastras have advised us, that is opposed to the basic principles of the Hindu Law or Dharma...…So far as I am concerned, I am convinced that the progress of the Indian people must be on all fronts – political, economic and social. All these are interrelated and backwardness in one leads to stagnation and a brake on others. That all-round progress must be related to modern condition and should be based on the genius and basic ideas which have governed India for a long time past. It is from this point of view that I consider a codification of Hindu law necessary" .[677]

Despite making these public pronouncements it is noteworthy that Nehru rarely contributed to the discussion in the assembly. Opposition to the bill was dismissed by him as being deliberate acts of disruption but when it came to making constructive proposals or providing details for a proper discussion, Nehru was more often absent or silent. This contrast between what Nehru said about the Code in public and how little he had to say on its actual content during discussions in the legislative assembly suggests that, for him the Hindu Code had emerged as a useful issue through which to pitch himself as the party's social reformer and to portray other members, especially those who were counterweights to him, as conservative and obscurantist. In this way Nehru could deflect somewhat the criticism he was facing from Communists and Socialists about the lack of real reform under his leadership.

[677] Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru Selected Works* Vol. 17. Series Two, pp. 192 – 4.

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More evidence of how little Nehru had really reflected upon the implications and significance of the Code Bill is contained in the statements that he made to his contemporaries in power. For example, in one of his regular letters to Chief Ministers written on October 4, 1951, he explained how the Hindu Code had been pending for four or five years and how, despite the controversy and the interminable speeches he was still keen for it to go through. This he argued was important in terms of bringing about social change for "Our social organization has shown both virtues and vices in the past. It has displayed an amazing cohesion and continuity….Whatever its virtues might have been in the past, it is clear that major changes are required in the present. The Hindu Code Bill represents an attempt to bring about some changes without shaking up too much the social organization".[678] In a letter dated 20 May 1955, Nehru emphasized the radical nature of the bills: "The social plane has not been ignored previously because we have always laid stress on the abolition of untouchability and the like. But the Hindu Marriage Bill brought us fully square against the conservative reactionary forces in the country. Apart from the merits of the measure itself, this action of ours has raised out prestige in other countries. It has shown that our Government and the forces behind it are progressive on every plane and are not afraid even of coming into conflict with orthodoxy".[679]

Not appreciating the extent to which religious principles pervaded Indian society, Nehru was in danger of underestimating the degree of opposition that such a bill was bound to generate. In fact in the end, ironically his prediction is precisely what ensued. Hailed as radical reform, the Hindu Code was successfully moulded to produce something that indeed did not shake up social organisation. The law makers who dominated the discussion (of

[678] *Letters to Chief Ministers*, (Jawaharlal Memorial Fund, New Delhi, 1986) Volume Two, pp. 501 – 2.
[679] Ibid. Letter dated 20 May, 1955, Volume 4, p. 177.

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which Nehru was hardly part of) made sure that the bills did not fundamentally alter the situation.

7.6. The substance and Implications of the Hindu Code.

Since the bills were eventually passed it is important to examine more closely their content and their relationship to the existing body of common law. A piece of legislation which tends to be neglected and overlooked is the Special Marriage Bill which provided couples with the chance to register their marriage, regardless of religion. This was one of the most obvious cases of secular legislation yet it is usually sidelined in discussions about social reform and the Hindu Code. Passed in 1954, the Special Marriage Act (SMA) re-opened the debate on codification in the Lok Sabha and was closely followed by the Hindu Marriage and Divorce Bill. What is puzzling is why, having already provided citizens with the option of a civil form of marriage it was considered necessary to impose mandatory restrictions on those who chose not to opt for it. With the passing of SMA, a victory for secularism was claimed. Seeking to reform an earlier bill of 1872 which required one to foreswear religion before marrying under that act, the Special Marriage Bill had no such preconditions. As the proponents of this bill put it, this Bill 'is helpful in the preservation of our religion and consolidation of our religion'.[680] As another member pointed out, the reasons for a new bill were many given the changes it was to bring about:

(1) That this Bill is made applicable to all the citizens of India, irrespective of their religion.

(2) That it is made applicable to the citizens of India outside, or in other words, it will have extra-territorial jurisdiction.

[680] Sharma, D.C., Lok Sabha Debates, 17 December 1953, Column 2369.

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(3) That the age limit for marriage has been fixed at 18, formerly in the 1872 legislation, the age limit fixed for a girl was only 14 and,

(4) That this Bill provides for the legislation of those marriages also which had been performed either before or after the passing of the Bill under some other form or under some other law.[681]

In its initial form the Bill sought to 'punish' those who opted for it by depriving them of the right of adoption and severing them from the connection to the joint family as a means through which to preserve the Hindu system of personal law.[682]

When the Bill came back for consideration on 19 May, 1954 Law Minister Biswas explained that this 'is an attempt to lay down a uniform territorial law of marriage for the whole of India'.[683] The main improvement on the 1872 Act was that under this Act it allowed those who did *not* want or could not be recognised by any one of the recognised religious communities, to get married. Furthermore, 'it was laid down in that Act as originally passed, the parties to the marriage would have to sign a declaration that neither of them belonged to any of the religions specified, i.e. any community which had any personal law to govern it'.[684]

Another alteration that was to be introduced through the SMA was a provision relating to the prohibited degrees of relationship. Given that different communities had different ideas regarding whom one could, or could not, marry in terms of blood relations, the Act opted for a provision based on eugenics in order to avoid reference to customary

[681] Sahai, R, Lok Sabha Debates, 17 December 1953, Column 2380 – 1.
[682] This was later corrected for Hindus married under the Act by an Amendment in 1976.
[683] Biswas, Lok Sabha Debates, 19 May 1954, Column 7799.
[684] Ibid., Column 7800.

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variations.[685] As Law Minister Biswas explained in parliament in 1954, 'If you want to marry according to your customary law, it is open to you to do so. You need not come under the provisions of this Act. This being an Act for the whole of India, irrespective of caste, community, religion and so on, it will not do to introduce or to find place for customary variations'.[686] In fact the discussion that ensued following the introduction of this Act raised, as a prime concern, the question of how to reconcile provisions that accommodated customary practices with the need for uniformity. As one member of parliament put it, the Government 'wants to show that they are trying to evolve a uniform civil code but, if I may so, they are trying to introduce by the back-door the customary marriages' which he warned, ran the risk of committing 'fraud on the law'.[687]

Other objections voiced at the time included that 'our laws regarding marriage, and especially regarding divorce must be in consonance with the economic status of women'. Here the speaker argued that in rural India where 73.5 per cent of women were wholly dependent on husband, father or other bread-winners and 88 per cent of urban women, meant it was unlikely that women would be able to or even choose to avail themselves of the new divorce provisions, in fact it may make the more vulnerable.[688] The point being made was that unlike Europe where the change in the institution of marriage and divorce followed in the wake of rapid transformation in the society caused by education, economic status and political rights, India was attempting a process of social engineering entailing the reverse sequence: induced social change *prior* to economic and political transformation. Added to this, was the attempt to accommodate religious personal law alongside, adding to the confusion surrounding the principles underlying India's social legislation. Whilst the bottom

[685] See Uberoi, P. 'Enlightenment Eugenics, Hindu Orthodoxy and North Indian Prejudice. Legislating the family in Post-Independence India', *Occasional Papers in Sociology*, No. 8, June 2002.
[686] Biswas, Lok Sabha Debates, 19 May 1954, Column 7811.
[687] Nathwani, N.P., Lok Sabha Debates, 19 May 1954, Column 7890.
[688] Mohiuddin, Lok Sabha Debates, 19 May 1954, Column 7899.

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line ought to have been that all Indian citizens were equally free to opt for religious personal law or common law, in the end distinctions between the two were blurred.

Further dealing with the wider problem of nation and state building, the ever-sceptical Acharya Kripalani asked why there was a need for uniformity at all in the laws of marriage, "in a country like India, where nothing is uniform? Neither our dress, nor our food, nor our want of food is uniform".[689] Other sceptics and critics pointed out that divorce and remarriage was already provided for by the customary law of an estimated eighty per cent of the Hindu population and that the Act's *cautious* allowance of divorce in fact made this a form of 'liberalising' an upper caste minority at the cost of 'brahminizing' the majority.

What these early discussions surrounding the Special Marriage Act reveal, is that there was extensive consideration of these Bills and a number of members demonstrated foresight in assessing the potential positive and negative implications of such legislation. Furthermore the analysis reveals the need to take into account the author's original intentions behind the creation of a law, the setting up of an institution or a choice of policy. For instance the original Special Marriage Act as it was passed in 1872 bore the specific desire of Brahma Samaj followers who wanted a particular kind of civil marriage, not restricted by the injunctions of Hindu laws, because they wanted to marry outside the caste. By 1954 this restriction had gone with two pieces of legislation passed in 1946 and 1949[690] which lifted the restriction on inter-caste marriages. Whilst the intentions were clear in the case of the earlier Marriage Act, the 1954 Special Marriage Act remained beset by inner tensions as well as confusion arising from its overlapping with the Hindu Code Bills. This is evident, for

[689] Kripalani, Lok Sabha Debates, 20 May 1954, Column 7925.
[690] The Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act, 1946 and The Hindu Marriages Validity Act, 1949 which allowed for inter-caste marriage. Both were repealed with the coming into force of the Hindu Marriage Act.

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example, with the introduction of section 7 in the Hindu Marriage Act which restated and confirmed the dominance of customary law:

Section 7 – Ceremonies for a Hindu Marriage

(1) A Hindu marriage may be solemnized in accordance with the customary rites and ceremonies of either party thereto.

(2) Where such rites and ceremonies include taking the *saptapadi* (that is, the taking of seven steps by the bridegroom and the bride jointly before the sacred fire) the marriage becomes complete and binding when the seventh step is taken.

Under Section 3 – Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires –

(a) the expression 'custom' and 'usage' signify any rule, which, having been continuously and uniformly observed for a long time, has obtained the force of law among Hindus in any local area, tribe, community, group or family.

Provided that the rule is certain and not unreasonable or opposed to public policy.

What was hailed as momentous and modernist was that the Hindu marriage was no longer seen as a sacrament but as a contract and that marriage was treated as a conditional socio-legal agreement between adult and equal parties. However, as has been pointed out by scholars such as Menski, in terms of case law, the Act has not really helped the Hindu woman especially on issues of divorce and maintenance because the Hindu man has been able to claim that the marriage was not a real marriage as it had not followed strict custom.[691] Despite these internal vagaries the SMA was billed as a 'step in the right direction' towards

[691] See Menski, W. *Hindu Law. Beyond Tradition and Modernity*. (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003).

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the ultimate goal of a Uniform Civil Code.[692] Changing socio-political circumstances, it was argued required a new, 'progressive' and 'contractual' approach to marriage.[693]

7.7. Conclusion. The Hindu Code Legacy: a triumph of strategy over vision?

The Hindu Code Bills not only draw out the contradictions between Nehru's goals and the outcome but also reflect some of the tensions that are contained within the Indian Constitution as a whole, with regards safeguarding both individual and community rights. As one member of parliament put it, 'One section of the House wants that there should be a uniform civil code and there should be only secular laws and all religions should be done away with, while another section of the House resents interference in religion. Of course both have got justification because the Government is in a way, encouraging both. We have got the Special Marriage Act which reminds us that our society is secular, and there is the Hindu Marriage and Divorce Bill which, at the same time, tries to please the Hindus – simultaneously displeasing them by interfering on matters which ought not to be interfered with by the Government. There is also the Guardians and Wards Act which is, more or less, secular, and now they have brought in the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Bill.[694] The same member had another wise point to make: 'there cannot be a uniform civil code unless there is a uniform religion for the whole of India. So far as marriage , divorce and other things are concerned, each religion has got its own rules.....So on that ground, I oppose the idea of having a uniform civil code except in matters which are not religious, such as

[692] See Law Minister Biswas' introduction to the Special Marriages Bill, *Lok Sabha Debates* 19.v.1954, cols. 7797 – 99, Member of Parliament, Renu Chakravarty, *LSD* 16.xii.1953.col. 2317; *LSD* 7.ix.1954, cols. 1222 – 24; C.C.Shah *LSD* 19,v.1954, cols. 7831 – 32; C.R.Choudhury *LSD* 20.v.1954, cols. 7880 – 82, Jawaharlal Nehru *LSD*14.ix.1954, cols. 1860 – 62.
[693] See Jawaharlal Nehru *LSD* 21.v.1954, cols. 8048-54.
[694] Rao, P.S, Lok Sabha Debates, 9 December, 1954, Column 2236.

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regulation and procedure in Courts and the way in which evidence has to be taken and so on.'[695]

A central problem with the Hindu Code bills was that its mandate was unclear. On the one hand, it proclaimed itself as radical social reform and at the same time, it was cast as a measure that would strengthen the country's secular credentials and help cement national unity. A letter from Nehru to one of his Chief Ministers in May 1956 is revealing: "This Bill (the Hindu Succession Act) and the Hindu Marriage Act have a peculiar significance, not only because of the changes they bring about but chiefly because they have pulled Hindu law from the ruts in which it had got stuck and given it a new dynamism. In that sense, the passage of this legislation marks an epoch in India. It indicates that we have not only striven for and achieved a political revolution but that we are equally intent on economic social revolution; only by way of advance on these three separate lines and their integration into one great whole, will the people of India progress'.[696]

The problem however, remains whether the Hindu Code represents a step towards a uniform civil code or whether it remains a piece of 'Hindu' legislation. As has been demonstrated above, parts of the Hindu Code sought to institutionalise strictly, sometimes even retrogressive, Hindu practices. While other communities were given the 'freedom' to define, interpret and adapt over time the parameters and content of their personal law systems, the Hindus had to accept a formulation of rights and responsibilities codified by the State. This has meant on the one hand that other communities cling to their personal law systems as an integral right to religious freedom while Hindus have used the loopholes and contradictions within the Hindu Code to allow customary law to function when preferred.

[695] Ibid., Column 2337 – 8.
[696] Letter dated 10 May, 1956 in *Letters to Chief Ministers*, Vol.4, p. 369.

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The end result has been that a uniform code is highly unlikely to emerge in practice but which nevertheless remains a potent device in the game of politics.

The thesis contends that the implications of the Hindu Code were not fully thought through and that Nehru, who saw it primarily in secularist, modernisation terms, misrepresented what was at stake. Furthermore, the strategy that Nehru adopted differed significantly when compared with his actions in the two other policy arenas of foreign policy and economic policy. In the case of the Planning Commission the steps that had been followed consisted of the following: (a) consolidation of his power, (b) formation of an institution through which to shape policy and finally, (c) altering the parameters of discourse. The following table sets out the various phases that leading up to the passing of the Hindu Code Bills.

Table 8: The Changing Structure of Opportunities and the Hindu Code Bills.

PHASE	STRUCTURE OF OPPORTUNITIES	STRATEGY / OUTCOME
1930s *British legislation* e.g. 1937 *Shariat* law	The debate on codification had begun: discussed between British legislators, Hindu reform leaders. Congress did not engage in the debate on codification. Religion was discussed in terms of communalism & representation of religious communities.	Nehru not involved
1940-46 *Indian studies of Codification* e.g. 1944 Rau Committee report	Ambedkar took up the issue early on	Nehru not involved at this stage.
1946 – 49 *Codification Debate in*	Ambedkar introduced the issue of uniform code in the Constituent	Uniform Civil Code included as non-justiciable Directive Principle in Constitution

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Constituent Assembly	Assembly Debates (CAD). Proposed a reworked Hindu Code (HC). CAD revealed strong resistance to HC from Muslim and Hindu representatives. Congress still not openly committed to one position.	Nehru proclaimed crucial importance of HC Nehru proposed ways to delay decision on Hindu Code in legislature.
1950 - 1952 *Build-up to General Elections*	1951 Resignation of Ambedkar opens the arena for Nehru to take more prominent position. Patel, Prasad and Congress President Tandon are openly against Hindu Code.	HC mentioned passing in presidential address by Prasad. 1951 HC proclaimed by Nehru as way to emancipate Hindu women in report to A.I.C.C No mention of HC in Congress election manifesto Piecemeal approach proposed by Nehru.
1952 -56 *Lok Sabha Debates* *&* *Legislation*	Extensive discussion of bills in Lok Sabha: little participation of Nehru	Bills are passed with little input from Nehru No mention of HC in 1957 Congress Election Manifesto

As the table demonstrates the issue of a Uniform Code and the idea of a Hindu Code were discussions that largely occurred outside the Congress Party during the 1930s and early 1940s. If one examines the presidential speeches and resolutions passed by the AICC during these years religion was addressed as a concern with regards inter-communal relations and communal participation and representation. Nehru's early writings, as examined in chapter two, demonstrate that he too was not involved in the debate surrounding legislation and the idea of codification. Voicing his approval of Ambedkar's efforts in the late 1940s, Nehru seemed to throw his support and weight behind the project of a Uniform Civil Code. However, it was soon evident that both the Hindu Code and a Universal Civil Code were highly contested issues in the Constituent and Interim Assembly Debates and faced strong resistance within the Congress party. Proposing to discuss the bill in ways that would delay its passing through the interim assembly and referring to it as a piece of social reform

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legislation (specifically directed at Hindu women) rather than as a grand strategy to secularise society at large, Nehru toned down his endorsement. His proposal that it be discussed and ultimately passed in a piecemeal fashion ultimately led to the resignation of Ambedkar who felt the Prime Minister was engaging in filibuster tactics.

When the issue of codifying Hindu law came back to the legislative debates in the mid-1950s, Nehru's victory at the 1952 elections and his power within the party and cabinet had strengthened the hand of the 'secularists' and 'reformers'. Although the debates on each of the individual bills dragged on for a few years it was undisputed that eventually the four legs of the Hindu Code would be passed. With the wider debate on the merits and demerits of the secular state legislating on religion no longer on the table, the critics and opponents to the bills sought to restrict the scope of the Bills from within. Hence the bills contained numerous contradictions and some even endorsed retrogressive practices in the process of codification. Not interested in the details of the bills, Nehru was rarely present in any of the discussions on the individual bills. Once they were passed he hailed them as acts of social reform and a vital ingredient in the nation-building process but his statements and actions, neither prior to the bills nor in their aftermath, do not reveal any consideration of the potential pitfalls, inconsistencies and dangers of such legislation. Nor, ultimately was the Hindu Code presented as a Congress party achievement in the election manifesto of 1957.

As an institution therefore the Hindu Code emerged as a highly contested repository of values and an instrument of strategy, used by Nehru, his opponents and critics alike. The long-term impact of such an institution, where strategy so clearly dictated vision, will be examined in relation to the other two cases in the following concluding chapter.

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Chapter 8

The Conclusion

8.1. The shelf life of Nehru's Institutions: a comparative study of the three policies.

8.2. Methodological individualism and rationality as heuristic devices: Nehru as political actor.

8.3. An analytic narrative of institution formation: vision and strategy in the making of Nehru's policies.

8.4. Key Findings of the thesis.

8.4.1. Path dependence and the origins of institutions.

8.4.2. Institutional change and development.

8.5. Nehru as a case study: leadership, policy-making and the analysis of politics.

8.1. The shelf life of Nehru's Institutions: a comparative study of the three policies.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru has been the lynchpin of this thesis which sought to explore his inner world as well as his external context in order to understand the outcomes of his policy choices. He has been portrayed as the central actor and the prime agenda-setter during India's first decade of politics as an independent country. This, it must be admitted, is certainly an artifice since there were other important political leaders who played significant roles in policy making at the centre as well as at the state levels. The thesis has tried to

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portray contemporaries of Nehru as well as emphasize the fact that the terms of discourse were considerably wide and reflected a broad range of views especially in the early years of independence. Nevertheless Nehru is the central figure and, it has been argued, his policy choices hold crucial clues to India's subsequent path of political development. This is something that becomes more evident from the table below which tracks key developments in the three policy arenas of economic policy, relations with China and social reform covered in the thesis.

Table 9: The shelf life of Nehru's Institutions -
the Planning Commission, Panchasheela and the Hindu Code Bills.

Policy Area	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000-
Economic Policy	1964 reassessment or planning assumptions, methods, techniques and machinery Crisis of Planning 1967 Reform of Planning Agency	Liberalisation of trade regime under Janata government Nationalisation under Indira Gandhi	Liberalisation 'by stealth'.[697] 1980 New regime of industrial polices under Indira Gandhi 1985 'New Economic Policy' of Rajiv Gandhi	Full-blown liberalisation. 1991 government implemented reforms.	Further reforms to curb state power
Relations with China	1962 Sino-India Border	1979 External Affairs	1981 vice-ministerial	1993 visit of Narasimha	Trade Agreements

[697] Bhagwati and Srinivasan referred to the 1970s and 80s initiatives as 'reforms by stealth' in a 1993 report for the Ministry of Finance.

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	War	Minister Vajpayee's visit to PRC.	talks & border talks began 1986 / 87 Border tension 1988 visit to PRC by Rajiv Gandhi	Rao & signing of Peace and Tranquillity Agreement.	and Special Representatives Talks on the Border.
Socio-Religious reform	---	1979 Bai Tahira Case	1985 Shah Bano case 1986 Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act	1995 *Sarla Mudgal* case. 1998 & 1999 elections: BJP dropped Uniform Code in manifesto.	2004 elections: issue of UCC avoided by both BJP and Congress-led alliances.

What is interesting to note is how in each of the three cases the institutions which took shape under Nehru's leadership, the Planning Commission, Panchasheela and the Hindu Code, persisted in varying forms and functions to shape their respective policy areas over the subsequent forty years. In the case of the economy, the Planning Commission continues to be an important node in the policy-making, resource-allocation process *despite* the exogenous shocks of liberalisation and the push towards integrating the economy with the global economy that occurred from the 1990s onwards. The Commission has been an important source of research and reports on a number of economic sectors including agriculture, education, employment, health, infrastructure, rural development, social justice. On its own website its evolving functions are aptly described in the following way:

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"From a highly centralised planning system, the Indian economy is gradually moving towards *indicative planning*[698] where Planning Commission concerns itself with the building of a long term strategic vision of the future and decide on priorities of nation. It works out sectoral targets and provides promotional stimulus to the economy to grow in the desired direction. With the emergence of severe constraints on available budgetary resources, the resource allocation system between the States and Ministries of the Central Government is under strain. This requires the Planning Commission to play a mediatory and facilitating role, keeping in view the best interest of all concerned. It has to ensure smooth management of the change and help in creating a culture of high productivity and efficiency in the Government. The key to efficient utilisation of resources lies in the creation of appropriate self-managed organisations at all levels. In this area, Planning Commission attempts to play a systems change role and provide consultancy within the Government for developing better systems. In order to spread the gains of experience more widely, Planning Commission also plays an information dissemination role." [699]

Although the Planning Commission continues to set sector-wise targets these are not binding nor do they matter in a liberalised economy where the required output is importable and excess demand can be met through imports. As explained by the current Deputy Chairman, Montek Singh Ahluwalia in a recent article, the old import controls that came to be known as the 'licence permit raj' have been recognised as an impediment that served only to provide protection for domestic produces against foreign competition and led to high cost, low quality domestic produce which could not be exported. The highly complex and

[698] Italics added, see below for an explanation.
[699] Planning Commission official website: http://planningcommission.nic.in/aboutus/function.html as seen on 11 October, 2008.

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discretionary import control system also promoted extensive corruption.[700] Nevertheless there is scope for the Planning Commission to play an important role by sketching out a broad perspective of the economy over the longer term, a provision that has come to be known as 'indicative planning'. As Ahluwalia describes it 'By indicative planning, I mean defining broad national goals and objectives and presenting an internally consistent picture of the evolution of the economy..... Indicative planning can help to highlight the longer term structural changes that are likely to arise as a consequence of such growth and the challenges they pose in terms of action to be taken sufficiently in advance. For example, what would a 10 per cent growth, and the growth of manufacturing of around 14 per cent per year, mean in terms of the pace of urbanization and are our systems for urban planning capable of responding to this challenge?'[701]

As can be seen from the above the Planning Commission has been a successful case of institutional adaption. Initially set up to oversee the implementation of each stage of the five year plan and as a mechanism through which the Prime Minister exerted some control over economic policy, today it works as part and parcel of the market economy and in conjunction with a number of stakeholders including producer representatives, consumer groups, state actors and a number of ministries. It is telling that Monteq Singh Ahluwalia, a man closely associated with the reforms of 1991, one-time employee at the World Bank and former Indian Finance Secretary, is today the chairman of the Planning Commission. In his article Montek Singh Ahluwalia outlines three 'new' roles for the Planning Commission today. These are, the preparation of 'indicative plans' exploring the feasibility and implications of alternative scenarios of faster growth over the long term; the preparation of

[700] Ahluwalia, Montek Singh, *Seminar*, Issue Number 589, September, 2008 *http://www.indiaseminar.com/2008/589/589_montek_singh_ahluwalia.htm* as seen on 11 October, 2008.
[701] Ahluwalia, Montek Singh, *Seminar*, Issue Number 589, September, 2008 *http://www.indiaseminar.com/2008/589/589_montek_singh_ahluwalia.htm* as seen on 11 October, 2008.

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plan budgets in cooperation with the Ministries where the Commission can play the role of 'interlocutor, advisor, honest broker, persuader and to some extent, also incentiviser' and finally, the task of providing critical evaluation of policies and their effectiveness.[702]

The case of Panchasheela stands in stark contrast to the durability and adaptability of the Planning Commission. After the shock of the 1962 border war, Sino-Indian relations seemed to go into deep-freeze during the rest of the 1960s and 1970s. The ice was broken in 1981 when vice-ministerial talks were initiated. Despite this development the two countries came close to war in 1986 – 87 focusing on a remote valley in India's Eastern border area. In addition to representing a disputed section of the McMahon line the sector was of strategic importance to both India and China. It was in fact here that heavy fighting broke out in October 1962 and from here that China launched its major offensive into plains of India.

Responding to Chinese claims to territory south of the McMahon line the Indian Parliament passed a bill in 1986 transforming the union territory of Arunachel Pradesh (90,000 square kilometres of land that China also claimed) into the twenty-fourth state of the Indian Republic. Ultimately diffusing the crisis, the two countries moved towards rapprochement and India accepted the long-standing invitation to its then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, Gandhi's landmark visit in 1988 constituted a major shift with India dropping its long-held insistence that normalisation of relations would only be possible once the border / territorial issue had been resolved. A series of agreements were signed, a joint working group on the border was set up, and an annual exchange of foreign ministers was agreed to. Gandhi also indicated a willingness to cooperate with China on macro issues such as the creation of a New International Economic Order, disarmament and pollution. Echoing the

[702] Ahluwalia, Montek Singh, *Seminar*, Issue Number 589, September, 2008 *http://www.indiaseminar.com/2008/589/589_montek_singh_ahluwalia.htm* as seen on 11 October, 2008.

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Zhou En-lai, Nehru days of the 1950s when India and China had joined forces on issues such as the Korean War, decolonization and disarmament an attempt was made, briefly to demonstrate a united front on certain global issues. However, like Panchasheela of the mid-1950s this simply masked the reality that the two countries were likely to be competitors, a fact that was borne out by the low figures of trade between the two throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The process of 'normalisation' continued and the 1990s saw the signing of two 'Peace and Tranquillity Accords' which brought about some demilitarisation of the border. Panchasheela as a doctrine or a 'rules of engagement' remains however an 'empty document' given the fact that the whole stretch of border continues to be disputed territory.

Nevertheless Panchasheela has retained an emotive and rhetorical value, flourished at symbolic events such as the Asian-African conference or during official visits by representatives from either side. For instance during a recent visit to Beijing in January 2008, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Premier Wen Jiabao of the People's Republic of China resolved to promote the building of a harmonious world through developing a 'Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity' between the two countries. Mentioned in their joint statement was the belief that 'in the new century, *Panchasheela*, the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, should continue to constitute the basic guiding principles for good relations between all countries'.[703]

However, although the principles have survived the substantive content of the original agreement no longer stands. In answer to a question in parliament on 30 April, 2008 regarding whether India had signed any agreement with China on the issue of Tibet and if so, what issues were agreed upon, the Minister of External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee replied

[703] 'A Shared Vision for the 21st Century of the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China. Accessed through the official website of Indian Ministry of External Affairs, http://meaindia.nic.in/ on 11 October, 2008.

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that 'On 29 April 1954, India and the People's Republic of China signed the "Agreement between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India". This Agreement was aimed at promoting trade and cultural intercourse between India and Tibet Region of China and facilitating pilgrimage and travel by the peoples of India and China. The Agreement lapsed in 1962.' (emphasis added).[704] The lapse in 1962 occurred on technical grounds given that the original agreement was time-bound to being renegotiated after an eight year period. However, it is significant that after the 1962 border war there has been no extension or re-negotiation of the 1954 agreement.

Unlike the Planning Commission which re-moulded itself to fit in with the times and Panchasheela which has been relegated to symbolic rhetoric, the Hindu Code, having flared up as a highly contentious political issue in the 1970s and 80s, has taken a backseat. Following the burst of legislative activity in the 1950s there were no further moves towards uniformity on a national basis. With the initiative from the government gone, the courts took on the role of trying to achieve greater uniformity. For instance in 1979 the Supreme Court took a first step when it granted maintenance to Bai Tahira under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure which grants a wife, including a divorced wife, the right to maintenance from her husband. Section 127 of the Code limits this right with the provision that a woman would not be entitled to maintenance if she receives a sum under any customary law or personal law. In Tahira's case an amount had been agreed to under Muslim law by both parties at the time of marriage, an amount which the Court declared to be unreasonable. The Court went as far to state that 'no husband can claim under Section 127 (3)(b) absolution from his obligation under Section 125 towards a divorced wife except on proof of payment of a sum stipulated by customary or personal law whose quantum is more or less sufficient to do

[704] Accessed through the official website of Indian Ministry of External Affairs, http://meaindia.nic.in/ on 11 October, 2008.

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duty for maintenance allowance.'[705] Further attempts by the Courts to inject uniformity in personal laws however, became embroiled in political considerations.

The *Shah Bano* and *Sarla Mugdal* cases are good examples of the political controversy surrounding the discussion of a universal civil code. In the 1985 case the Supreme Court decided in favour of a Muslim woman, granting her maintenance from her divorced husband. Muslim personal law had not condoned such support and the judgement by the Supreme Court was seen as the State endangering Islam in India with the implicit motivation of imposing a uniform civil code. Initially welcoming the Court's ruling, the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi succumbed to pressure and decided to enact the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 which confirmed the supremacy of Muslim personal law in cases of Muslim divorce. By reversing the Court's decision the Act enraged women's groups, progressive Muslims, secularists as well as Hindu nationalists who asserted that minorities were being pampered and privileged at the expense of the majority community.

The 1995 *Sarla Mudgal* case addressed the attempt of Hindu men to circumvent the ban on polygamous marriages. Under Section 494 of the Indian Penal Code, a Hindu who marries while still married to someone else is acting illegally, an act that could result in the voiding of the second marriage and in the man going to jail. The same restriction does not apply to Muslim men who under their personal law system are allowed to have multiple spouses, a disparity that was sealed with the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, one of the Hindu Code Bills. This resulted in a number of Hindus converting to Islam . The Supreme Court decided to take action by declaring the second marriage of a Hindu husband converted to

[705] Quoted in Pal, R. 'Religious Minorities and the Law' in Larson, G.J. (ed.) *Religion and Personal Law in Secular India* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2001), p. 30.

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Islam as invalid. If a Hindu husband wanted to re-marry the law required him to first dissolve the earlier marriage in accordance with legal requirements provided for Hindus seeking a divorce.

The case brought out two particularly interesting tensions. On the one hand, it was criticised that under codified Hindu law, the 1955 Hindu Marriage Act provided various loopholes to bigamous husbands and at the same time, in the name of modernisation, had done away with traditional sources of Hindu law which had recognised and provided for the rights of wives in polygamous marriages. This surprisingly was a point of view raised by feminist writers, an example of which is Flavia Agnes.[706] The other underlying tensions to be brought to the fore by the *Sarla Mugdal* case was the Court's affirmation of the institution of monogamous marriage and its equation with 'justice, equity and good conscience', which by implication meant that those who engaged in polygamy, including the Muslims who, though protected by law, were in fact to be seen as violating 'the rules of natural justice'.[707] In fact Justice Kuldip Singh, who ruled upon the case asserted at the time, 'When more than 80% of the citizens have already been brought under the codified personal law there is no justification whatsoever to keep in abeyance, the introduction of "uniform civil code" for all citizens in the territory of India'.[708]

Both cases bring out well the fears, frustrations and conflicting visions surrounding the uniform civil code. Nehruvian nationalists see the code as critical to the project of modernisation; advocates of civil rights see it as vital to the expansion of equal opportunities;

[706] See Agnes, Flavia *Law and Gender Equality: The Politics of Women's Rights in India*. (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999).
[707] Language used by Justice Kuldip Singh. See Jacobson, G.J. *The Wheel of Law. India's Secularism in Comparative Constitutional Context*. (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2003), pp. 112 – 3.
[708] Ibid. p. 114.

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members of religious groups see the code as a threat to their cultural identity while Hindu nationalists are suspected to welcoming it precisely because it would bring an end to the constitution's defence of 'special privileges' to minorities. The fact that the Uniform Civil Code project has taken on such a multi-valent significance has naturally turned it into a highly instrumental and polemic issue. However, by the late 1990s it had retreated again into the background as the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party contested elections and sought to bring together a secularist coalition of partners. Similarly in the elections of 2004 the issue of a uniform civil code was strategically avoided by both the Bharatiya Janata Party and Congress-led alliances.

The three trajectories briefly described above was meant to demonstrate the extent to which the issues that were of central concern at independence such as, the delimitation of India's borders, protecting socio-cultural differences while ensuring equality for all and providing the state with the power to plan and manage the economy, have continued to be core themes in Indian politics. On each, Nehru left his imprint by way of a particular institutional legacy, Panchasheela, the Hindu Code and the Planning Commission respectively and they have shaped the range of options available to actors within the particular policy field. What this thesis has tried to do is to highlight, through process tracing, the considerations related to power politics that led to Nehru's choices of policy. It is posited that the usual approach of simply looking at policy outcomes does not give a full picture of the innate limitations and resilience. Three central findings on the long-run resilience of institutions are proposed:

1. Institutions born out of a drive for consensus are likely to be more adaptable with the times (the example of the Planning Commission).
2. Institutions that represent deeply-held values of the author and do not appear to have any other basis for legitimacy are likely to be untenable (Panchasheela).

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3. Institutions that are instrumentalised by the author at the time of creation are likely to remain contentious (Hindu Code and Uniform Civil Code project).

8.2. Methodological individualism and rationality as heuristic devices - Nehru as political actor.

The thesis has sought to locate itself within the Weberian tradition of methodological individualism which offered an alternative to the dominant approaches of the 'grand' modernisation theories of the 1950s and 60s. Such theories (examined closely in chapters one and two) contended that large social phenomena such as modernisation could only be explained by large variables such as social mobilisation, industrialisation and democratisation. Methodological individualism on the other hand posits that a social phenomenon must be comprehended in terms of *why* the actors behaved the way they did to the effect of producing the phenomenon in question. A further contribution of methodological individualism, and particularly Max Weber, was to argue that *explaining* actions, beliefs and attitudes of an actor meant *understanding* them in terms of reconstructing their meaning to the actor. Chapter three aimed at attaining this position of *understanding* by attempting to explain Nehru's preferences based on his own work and, as far as possible, using his own words. This, it is believed, allows for a more nuanced analysis of Nehru, the political actor and the impact of his legacy on Indian politics.

Applying the distinction that was drawn in chapter two between *value* and *instrumental* rationality to the case of Nehru and his impact on Indian politics, the proposition is made that Nehru's policy choices should neither be hailed as the glorified actions of a self-

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abnegating freedom fighter and national hero, nor dismissed as the naive choices of a political greenhorn. Both interpretations have been prevalent in writings about Nehru and the years that he was in power. A survey of the 'Nehru literature' in chapter one demonstrated this prevalent bias and explored the implications that this has had for the study of Indian politics. The subsequent example is an apt illustration.

Following the death of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, the noted scholar, Dietmar Rothermund was invited to deliver a lecture under the auspices of the Max Mueller Bhavan (the German cultural institute in India) at various institutions and universities in India which he titled, *Jawaharlal Nehru: Socialist and Mediator*. The speech, which was of course meant to be a eulogy, nevertheless captures some of the problems that have characterized the literature. Rothermund casts Nehru as 'the ideal type of the radical mediator.....a man who wants to transcend the limitations of his political environment both in terms of a new political vision and a quest for untapped sources of power'.[709] *Vision* and *power* are key words but the importance of both is lost in the text as he goes on to describe the extent of and limitations to Nehru's radicalism which was rooted in socialism but was not dictated by an ideological doctrine. Instead Nehru is portrayed as a highly pragmatic and patient political actor, who had 'a detached view of political decisions....(was able to) transcend the level of petty tactics of the national movement and refer to the grand strategic alignments and to the inevitable progress toward a socialist future'.[710] Whilst the content and contradictions in Nehru's vision are briefly mentioned power completely disappears from the portrait of the man and his actions. Instead one is left with the impression that Nehru was in fact disinterested in power and concerned primarily with the task of mediating the competing aims of groups within the spectrum of Indian politics, reconciling the imperatives of economic and political

[709] *1964 Yearbook*, Max Mueller Bhavan Publications, 1964, New Delhi, p. 1.
[710] *1964 Yearbook*, Max Mueller Bhavan Publications, 1964, New Delhi, p. 15.

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independence and the urgent need for both radical socio-economic change and political stability.

The invaluable role that Nehru had to play in Indian politics notwithstanding the depiction masks the fact that power often motivated Nehru's decisions and policy choices. Like any political leader, Nehru needed to consolidate his position within the Congress party and within his government in order to ensure that his policy preferences would prevail. This he managed to achieve not only through luck and contingency but also in the strategic use of policy issues and debates as was showcased with the examples of the Planning Commission, the Hindu Code Bills and the Panchasheela Agreement in chapters five, six and seven. Hence one of the driving questions of the research was to ask whether *value* rationality is as important as *instrumental* rationality in understanding policy choices and the long-run implications for policy reform and implementation.

As demonstrated in each of the three substantive chapters, Nehru's actions and policy choices can be best understood as a combination of both. Values help explain Nehru's predispositions towards certain issues over others and his way of perceiving the issue within a wider context, be it socialism, secularism or non-alignment. Instrumental rationality on the other hand, explains the timing of certain policies, the changes in content and justification as policies took shape. What this thesis ends with, is the proposition that instrumental rationality as encapsulated in policy choices helps explain their long-run trajectories. The actor's predilections, in this case Nehru's, are then no longer of central explanatory importance when analysing India's democratic or secular credentials. Rather, Nehru's, or any leader's legacy needs to be examined in terms of the compromises struck and the confrontations engaged in, given the political constraints of the time. It is this strategic dimension to policy making that

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crucially sculpts the nature, scope and symbolism of a particular policy, making what is left *out* as interesting as what the policy in the end entails.

8.3. An analytic narrative of institution formation - vision and strategy in the making of Nehru's polices.

Institutions are a core feature of political, social and economic life as they provide the incentive structure that affects the choices and behaviour of individuals. Political institutions are distinct from economic institutions in that within a democratic framework, they need not necessarily be enforced but should ideally be adhered to voluntarily. An institution is successful if it incorporates a large number of adherents from across the political spectrum. As seen from the above, institutions can have markedly different trajectories and even while producing highly inefficient social outcomes, can continue to exist. However, while functionalists and rational choice theorists might tend to argue the *raison d'être* of an institution can be 'read backward' from its current functions or features, the thesis has argued that it is necessary to explore the origins of institutions. Only then is it possible to fully appreciate the extent to which an institution has evolved and adapted over time.

Path dependence is a crucial underlying assumption here which posits that once a particular path has been chosen, the costs of reversal are very high. What is interesting in the three cases that have been investigated here is how each became a vehicle reproducing what were essentially *colonial* practices and preferences[711]. In the case of the planning commission, this represented a continuation in utilitarian thinking which was highly popular

[711] See page 96 for a chronological table of Nehru's career and key national developments as well as the tables at the end of chapters five, six and seven for the phases leading up to the Planning Commission, Panchasheela and the Hindu Code Bills respectively.

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in Britain during the nineteenth century at the time of John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham and which later took the form of Fabianism in the early 20th century, a strong influence on Nehru's formative years spent in the United Kingdom. At about this time, planning had emerged as a popular theme within the Fabian community in Britain particularly after Beatrice and Sidney Webb, key members of the Fabian society, visited the Soviet Union in the early 1930s and returned to praise the idea of planning as the new way to rationalise the economy for the social good[712]. Panchasheela and India's policy towards China inherited and continued a colonial attitude towards borders and frontiers and finally, the Hindu Code Bills replicated the belief in codification which had been initiated by British parliamentarians and law makers. Under Nehru's stewardship therefore in the 1950s it is ironic to note that nineteenth century ideologies and practices popular in Britain were being replicated and given institutional form in Indian politics. This is an important observation that the thesis has tried to explore because the case has been made that while Nehru had his own preferences and worldview his choices were also driven by the need to consolidate power, an option which more often than not entailed maintaining the status quo as opposed to introducing radical change. In other words, although Nehru's vision was often cast as ground-breaking in fact he was more often than not, reproducing preferences of the colonial state.

However, what is interesting is the variation in strategy across the three cases and the implications this had for Indian politics in the longer run in terms of the ability of institutions to adapt and the extent to which an institution became entrenched within the political arena. While the model specified in chapter two of the thesis applied three core explanatory variables: Nehru's Vision, the Structure of Opportunities and the Choice of Strategy to explain *policy outcome,* North provides a valuable insight into the process of *institutional*

[712] See for instance, Bevir, M. 'Sidney Webb: Utilitarianism, Positivism and Social Democracy' in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 74 / 2 (Jun, 2002), pp. 217 – 252.

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change[713]by modelling four crucial variables: the agent, the source, the process and the path of institutional change. The agent of change is the decision maker(s), the entrepreneur, who based on his subjective perceptions, will make certain choices that determine the design and shape of the institution. Secondly, the *sources* of change are the opportunities perceived by the entrepreneurs, stemming either from a change in exogenous conditions or from the acquisition of new knowledge and skills by the actor. As North put it, 'Deliberate institutional change will therefore come about as a result of the demands of entrepreneurs in the context of perceived costs of altering the institutional framework at various margins.'[714] It is important to note that North identifies both the internal world of subjective preferences as well as the external world of opportunities and constraints as important determinants of institutional change. The process of change is identified as being largely incremental since institutional change will usually occur at the margins which are considered most pliable given the bargaining power of the interested parties. Finally, the direction of change is in North's opinion characterized by path dependence given that stakeholders emerge with a particular bias, and an interest in maintaining the institutional matrix in place.

A noteworthy conclusion that North draws is that 'formal institutions (either deliberately or accidentally) lower the price of acting on one's ideas and therefore increase the role of mental constructs and ideological stereotypes in choices.'[715] This would suggest that in the case of India's planning and economic development strategies, among the more highly institutionalised policy arenas, there was greater scope for entrenched beliefs and

[713] North, D. C. 'Towards a Theory of Institutional Change' in Barnett, W. , Hinich, M.J. & Schofield, N.J. *Political Economy, Institutions, Competition and Representation* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993), p. 63.
[714] North, D. C. 'Towards a Theory of Institutional Change' in Barnett, W. , Hinich, M.J. & Schofield, N.J. *Political Economy, Institutions, Competition and Representation* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993), p. 63.
[715] Ibid. p. 68.

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ideology to play a role in policy choices. The thesis posits that based on the case study of the Planning Commission it would seem that such a scenario allows for greater adaptability as institutions are able to stretch and accommodate new ideas over time, contributing overall to the stability of politics in that particular policy arena. In contrast, foreign policy which was under-institutionalised to begin with, and remained so during Nehru's years as Prime Minister, created a void after his death. Finally, in the case of the Hindu-Code which can be depicted as a 'partially institutionalised' policy arena, politics and policy-making have been prone to politicking and instrumentalisation. The following table depicts these insights.

Table 10: The Process behind Nehru's Policies.

	Pre-history	**Nehru's Vision**	**Structure of Opportunities**	**Choice of Strategy**	**Policy Outcome/ long-run resilience**
HINDU CODE	Was the subject of policy discourse but not institutionalised.	Vaguely articulated	Highly controversial issue. Criticised from Left and Right.	Filibustering Long debate Polemic discourse.	Reached a deadlock, unfinished agenda of Uniform Civil Code.
PANCHASHEELA	No institutional lineage	Moderately articulated	Wide range of alternative views.	No discussion in parliament prior to signing of agreement	1962 war with China. Ambiguous and contradictory positions on relations with China.
PLANNING	Institutionally active pre-1947	Highly articulated	Multiple actors involved	Consensus-driven	Key actor in implementation of economic

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COMMISSION			across political spectrum		policy. Adapted to liberalisation of the 1990s.

8.4. Key Findings of the thesis.

8.4.1. Path dependence and the origins of institutions.

The thesis has made an attempt at understanding a particular set of policy decisions in terms of the *process* that led to their selection. *When* this happened is considered to be as important as *how* and as a result chapter four was devoted to the context of institutional and ideological parameters that framed the range of policy choices available at the time. The past therefore is not seen as a source of data nor as a resource for illustrating parallels but is considered important on theoretical grounds given that all, social and political, processes have a temporal dimension. In the introduction it was argued that timing and sequence provide the analyst with useful tools for understanding (a) the origins of institutions and (b) the 'stickiness' of inherited institution. This premise was combined with a focus on the strategic interaction among calculating, rational individuals to produce an analysis of 'Nehru's institutions'. Hence, the fact that the three policy choices of the Planning Commission, Panchasheela and the Hindu Code Bills were concluded in 1950, 1954 and in 1955, 56 respectively is regarded to be as important as understanding the particular substantive goals embodied in each.

8.4.2. Institutional change and development.

An extended time frame helps to counter functional interpretations of politics which argue that institutional arrangements can be explained by their consequences or that

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institutions take the form they do, and persist, because powerful actors engaged in rational, strategic behaviour seek to produce the outcomes that are observed. Such an understanding of politics underestimates the sizeable time lag between actors' actions and the long-term consequences of those actions. Political actors, under the pressure of every-day politics may not think deeply about the long-term. Hence, the long-term effects of institutional choices must be seen as by-products and not necessarily as embodying the original goals of the actors. However, the core insight that has been highlighted in this thesis is to think of institutions as fundamentally endogenous to the policy process. In other words, the policy process itself is able to alter the manner in which institutions function. This is an important proposition because the tendency has been to think of institutions as exogenous, as fixed and unchanging. Such a view, it is posited is not wrong but fails to take into account where the institution came from. How it was negotiated that one particular institutional form prevailed over another? How capable to the institution is of implementing its original intended functions and why some institutions are better able to evolve over time in response to new issues and the actions of competing institutions?

The institutions that were under investigation here vary in terms of their form. Panchasheela was a set of principles incorporated into a treaty signed between India and China, the Hindu Code Bills were passed as legislative bills and finally, the Planning Commission became part of the administrative bureaucracy of the state. Given the difference in form, it is difficult to generalize across the three since the mechanisms of reproduction and institutionalization are different in each case. This has not been the primary goal of the thesis and it was only in the conclusion that the effects on long-run institutional evolution, compared across the three examples, were referred to. It is noteworthy however, that the three have acted as 'carriers' of Nehru's vision long after his death and continue to frame the

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parameters of debate and policy options in current Indian politics. By examining each policy closely the thesis tried to draw out the value-driven and instrumental rationality embodied in each so as to gain a better understanding of why these particular choices were made over others. Furthermore, it was posited that a study of Nehru's writings and speeches during the independence struggle, the period during which his political persona was being moulded, revealed the conceptual and logical clarity of his thoughts on various policy challenges. Moving to the post-independence period when Nehru was Prime Minister, it was argued that the different strategies applied in the policy-making process reflected the contextual and political constraints under which Nehru was functioning.

What this exercise has demonstrated is that there are very strong sources of continuity in Indian politics, linking contemporary debates and institutions to colonial discussions and methods of government. Nehru, did not just represent the new dawn, to which he alluded to in his evocative speech at midnight on the eve of India's independence August 14, 1947 but, to a large extent he was the line of continuity that would reinforce the link between India's emergent politics and the British inheritance. This continuity manifest itself not only in the institutional form of government but also in the preferences that were to give rise to particular policies – the thesis has focused on three of these[716]. Combined with the fact that as a politician, Nehru had to strategically navigate a changing structure of opportunities the following insights have been generated about the origin of the institutions underpinning his policies:

1. In a policy field where (i) the actor has invested intellectual resources and recognised the complexity of the issue and the challenges involved and, (ii) the actor faces an

[716] For a study that examines continuity and discontinuity in a western country see Pfetsch,, Frank R. *West Germany: Internal Structures and External Relations* (Praeger, New York, 1988). In this book path dependency, the institutional framework, as well as the decision-making process is examined in terms of how they framed the options for West Germany's foreign policy.

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uncertain political environment, policy choices are likely to be driven by long-run vision and compromise (The Planning Commission).

2. In a policy field where (i) the actor has not invested intellectual resources in identifying the potential pitfalls and, (ii) the actor faces an uncertain political environment, policy choices are likely to be risky (Panchasheela).
3. In a policy field where (i) the actor has previously invested little intellectual interest in the subject and, (ii) faces a certain political environment, policy choices are likely to take the form of calculated instrumentalisation (Hindu Code).

The focus on policies made in the early to mid-1950s has sought to highlight how crucial this decade was for India's subsequent political development.

8.5. Nehru as a case study: leadership, policy making and the analysis of politics.

As a case study, Jawaharlal Nehru's policy-making and policy choices shed light on the general question of whether politics produces efficient equilibriums over time and whether institutions that evolve and persist, can be explained in terms of the political interests they are supposedly serving at the time. What this thesis has sought to demonstrate, by focusing on the policy making process, is to argue that such perspectives do not take into account the constraints surrounding the origins of a particular policy nor the likelihood of unintended consequences that become locked-in over time. Using a method of process tracing and the analytic narrative helps to understand and identify the inner mechanisms of causation and how strategy can congeal particular policy choices. Furthermore a 'within' case study generates information about the context in which it exists and the particular meaning and significance of politics at the time.

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An important caveat that needs to be re-emphasized is that the thesis has not sought to judge the policies of Nehru since this would be an exercise that both, unfairly benefits from the privilege of hindsight as well as suffering from the vagaries that can be generated as conditions and priorities change over time. Instead the more modest and realistic goal was to trace the origins and original intentions at a time when crucial choices and decisions were being made. Nevertheless, the thesis is fundamentally interested in how Nehru went about conducting politics and the continuous interplay between strategy and vision that guided his actions and moulded his preferences or in other words, the aim has been to explore the strategic use of authority in a range of different settings that Nehru engaged in.

The topic of leadership in political science gained interest at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when Max Weber defined politics as 'the leadership, or the influencing of the leadership of a *political* association, hence today, of a *state*' and drew attention to the question of how leaders derived their legitimacy.[717] While this field fell into some obscurity it has experienced a revival in recent years in the face of scepticism from the field of political science which extolled methods of empirical-driven research, comparison, quantification and establishing counterfactuals as opposed to interpretive approaches. The result has been the relinquishing of responsibility to political biographers, historians, journalists, and former diplomats whose biographies about political leaders and personalities mostly do not make an attempt to employ modes of analysis and methodological tools that the social sciences have to offer. Rather than providing the grounds for generalisation, the inclination has been to produce writing that relies on empathy, personal recollections and a free-flowing narrative without addressing the problems of whether terminology and concepts held the same meaning

[717] From *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Gerth, H.H. & Mills, C.W. (Oxford University Press, New York, 1958), pp. 77 – 78.

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for the subject as for the reader or writer, or discussing the mechanisms of causality assumed by the author.

The purely descriptive biography assumes that 'facts' are neutral and enough to enlighten the reader. However, often the nature of the sources and the selection of the data introduces a hidden bias for instance the fact that much of the widely available documents of Jawaharlal Nehru have been officially sanctioned by the Gandhi family which means that one does not know what has been withheld from public knowledge. Hence, unlike existing biographies of Nehru the thesis emphasized the use of parliamentary debates, party documents and the writings of Nehru's contemporaries. Furthermore, by reproducing the notion of great men in history, existing perceptions of the heroes and villains in history are reproduced, a problem the thesis noted in chapter one. Of course this is not always the case and the art of writing biographies has produced many impressive examples of rigorous and path-breaking scholarship.

The study of Nehru has been a useful exercise in terms of raising new kinds of questions such as why Nehru turned into such an authoritative figure, and why he became the kind of leader that he was or, was perceived to be, a 'gentle colossus' as one contemporary put it[718] or 'India's ineffectual angel' as another.[719] In the hope however, of producing something that was ultimately comparable, the thesis sought to highlight two critical variables as having an impact on individual action: the political environment and the personality or inner world of the actor. Conceptualised as 'vision' and 'strategy', the argument was made that the successful leader understands the constraints of his context, the

[718] Hiren Mukherjee, then leader of the Communist Party of India, wrote a book at the time of Nehru's death in 1964 with this title.

[719] Nirad Chaudhuri in a review article that appeared in the *Times Literary* Supplement, December, 1975, about the first volume of S. Gopal's biography of Nehru.

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'structure of opportunities' as well as the wider compulsions. While the individual does not act in isolation, both vision and strategy are essential ingredients if, he or she is to navigate the multiple challenges and opportunities particular to the times.

Such an approach lays the basis for analysing an array of political leaders, ranging from the dictatorial to the democratic, providing one framework through which for example to examine President of the United States, Barak Hussain Obama or President of Iran, Mamhmoud Ahmadinejad. The rules of candidate selection and policy making obviously differ widely, but once these are taken into account, both are treated as actors with certain idiosyncrasies predisposing them to certain formulations and ideals but whose strategic understanding of the context, how to stay in power and how to enhance their power, crucially determine the contours of policy. With context a central ingredient in the model, path dependency is part of an explanation that takes history just as seriously as contingency. Hence neither President Obama nor President Ahmadinejad can be seen as entirely divorced from the events and policies that preceded them. Jinnah, the leader of independent Pakistan and a contemporary of Nehru, could be studied in a similar manner to generate useful insights into why his vision of a secular, democratic state for Muslims with a sturdy rule of law failed to evolve into resilient institutionalised policies.

The thesis has sought to engage in an analysis of Indian politics that allows for both generalisation and particularity. Western political science and political theory have, in recent times, often been accused of bearing a normative bias and a Eurocentric view of how democracy should work and what the outcomes of modernisation should be. The approach adopted in the thesis provides for a study that examines processes generated by a particular

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historical, institutional environment as well as political impulses that are the engine of politics everywhere.

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Methodological note on sources.

As primary sources the thesis has used legislative debates and published material. This includes the private documents of individuals (Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Subhas Chandra Bose) as well as party documents (Congress Party) and party manifestos and reports of institutions. In addition to self-portraits or self-appraisals in the form of Nehru's autobiography and books, what has also been used as a primary source is the material written by his contemporaries so as to get different viewpoints of the political context (see for instance Kripalani, Masani, Gadgil, Kaul, Panikkar, Mahalanobis).

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Appendix

Documents

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Table depicting 'Structure, Process and power in planning under Nehru.'